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ROBERT EDMOND JONES
Scene Designer, Artist, Director,
and Author.
(See article on page 4.)

VOL. XIII. No. 3

A National Publication Devoted to Dramatics in the Secondary Schools

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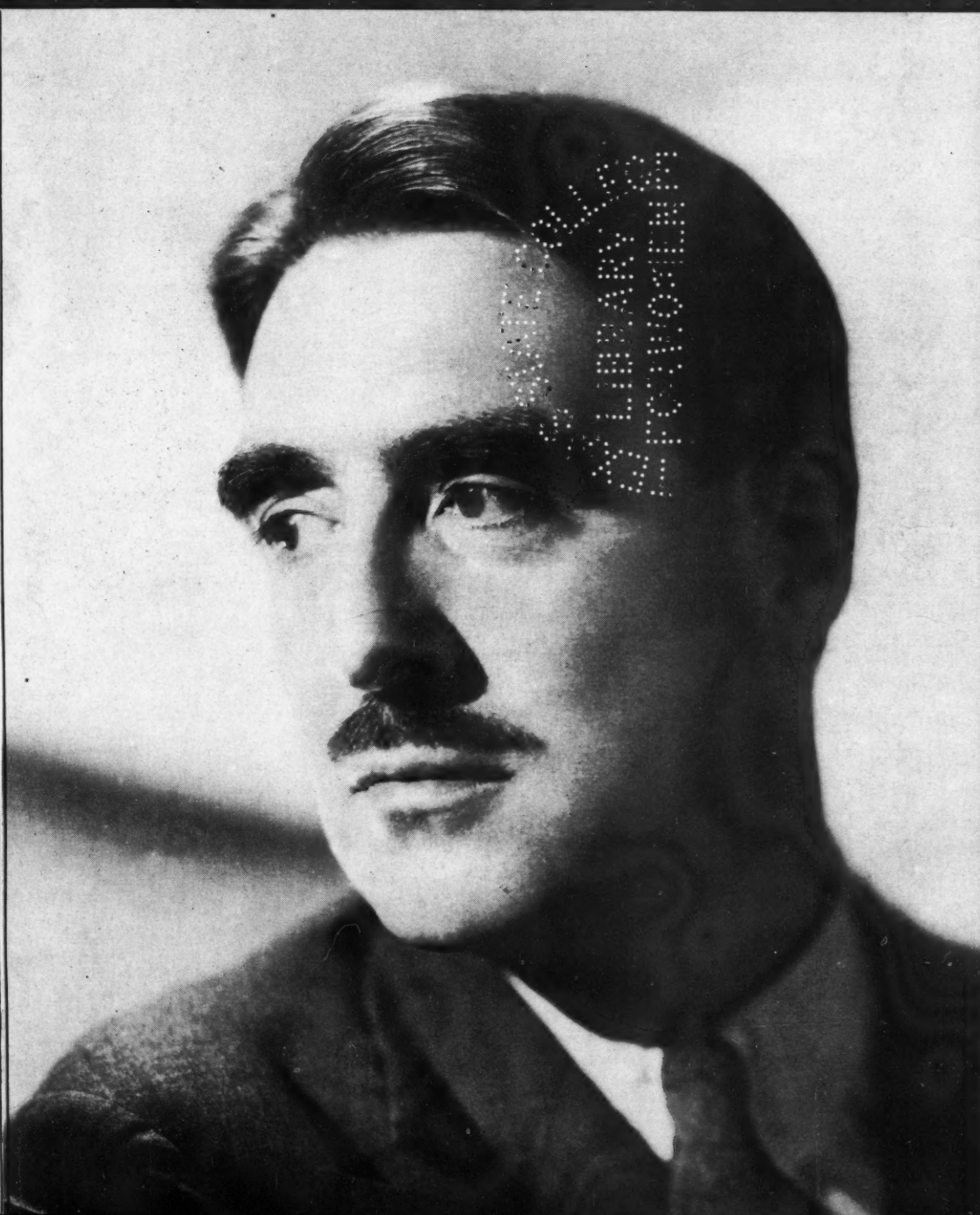
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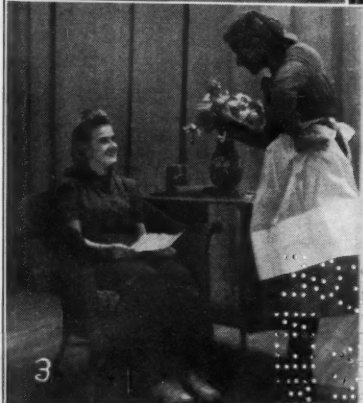
PRESENT-DAY TRENDS IN
SCENIC DESIGN

(Part III)

By ARNOLD S. GILLETTE

DECEMBER, 1941





1. Thespians Doris Mae Norman and Oscar Utter in *Little Women*, a production of Troupe No. 261 at the Fairmont, Minn., High School. Directed by Miss Caryl Meyer. 2. Members of Thespian Troupe No. 451 at the Findlay, Ohio, High School. Mr. Wilbur E. Hall, sponsor. 3. Scene from *What Are You Going to Wear?* at the Field-Kindley Memorial High School, Coffeyville, Kansas. Miss Lydia Back, director. 4, 5. Cast, understudies and production staff for *Stage Door* at the Norfolk, Nebr., Senior High School. Thespian Troupe No. 112. Donley F. Feddersen, director. 6. Scene from *Outward Bound* as staged by Blandford Jennings at the Clayton, Mo., High School. Thespian Troupe No. 322. 7. Thespians Paul Young and Margaret Roche in Act II of *June Mad*. A production of Troupe No. 352 at the Robbinsdale, Minn., High School. Miss Bess V. Sinnott, director. 8. Scene from the production of *Young April* at the Custer, S. Dak., High School. Directed by Eva Nelson. Thespian Troupe No. 384. 9. Thespians Phyllis Johnsen as Aunt Stella and Mordce Dritley as Mr. Long in *Happy-Go-Lucky* at the Benton Harbor, Mich., High School. Thespian Troupe No. 455. Miss Mary E. Furr, director.

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JANUARY ISSUE

THIS season, for the first time, we shall have a January issue of THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN, replacing the September number which has been discontinued.

We are now editing the January issue and we are asking Santa Claus to make a special effort to deliver your copy to you in time for the Christmas Holidays. We cannot reveal its interesting contents now, but it will be an issue entirely different from anything we have published before. We hope you will like it. We will resume our regular publication schedule in the February number.—Editor.

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Broadway at a Glance

by MARGARET WENTWORTH

Broadway Drama Critic, New York City

SEVEN plays came in during September, of which only two survived, less than a third. The record for October is better, about half of those produced staying the course, six out of twelve. *Ah, Wilderness!* was scheduled for only a four weeks' run and was greeted with enthusiasm even by those who remembered the first presentation.

Candle In The Wind

Candle in the Wind is a success, with Helen Hayes' acting, the Theatre Guild production and Maxwell Anderson's writing make it so, in that order. Mr. Anderson occasionally lets his play wander away from drama into arguments about freedom and as we all agree with his point of view, we feel we don't need it stressed.

In *Mary of Scotland* the heroine was pitted against the power of Elizabeth and triumphantly asserted that she won in spite of everything. In *Candle in the Wind* she has against her the cruelty and insolence of military power. Madeline Guest, the role taken by Miss Hayes, is an American actress caught in the Paris she loves by the outbreak of war and unable to leave because she has fallen in love with Raoul St. Cloud, an officer in the French Navy. There is an exquisite scene between them in the gardens of Versailles, in which he tells her of his escape from drowning after his vessel was submarined, because he was under her protection. But her protection, however mystically effective against the ocean waves, is useless when he is arrested and marched off to a concentration camp. The rest of the play is devoted to her efforts to free him. She tries everything—threats, entreaty, bribery—and finally succeeds in winning one of his guards by the sheer force of her personality. In a relative sense, he is free again; free, that is, to live as a hunted fugitive, a man broken by torture and hunger. All who have helped her will have to suffer but her American citizenship will afford her some measure of protection.

Louis Borell, of French descent, makes a charming Raoul and John Wengraf, who might himself have been in a concentration camp if he had not left Vienna hurriedly after the Anschluss, is a most convincing, stony chief of one. Evelyn Varden as an American friend supplies humor to lighten the play and Mr. Mielziner's sets emphasize the contrast between the beauty of the park and the chill forbidding aspect of the camp. Miss Hayes, of course, has the audience in the hollow of her hands. Such a little thing, so gallant, so loyal; as long as there are such stout hearts as hers, the candle may flicker in the wind but will not be blown out.

Musicals

George Abbott is one of the producers

who seems always ready to give youth a chance and his faith pays him dividends. His new musical, *Best Foot Forward*, has for its plot the appearance of a motion picture star at a prom in a prep school. Nothing very startling about the idea but the parts are so suited to the actors and they to the parts, everyone concerned is having such a good time, that a good time is had by all, on both sides of the footlights. Much credit is due Mr. Abbott's direction but the boys and girls are all right too.

High Kickers for its fun relies on such veterans as George Jessel and Sophie Tucker and does not rely in vain. *Let's Face It!* has fun with the army and has tunes you'll be hearing soon. *Viva O'Brien* had only a three weeks' run, proving that gorgeous costumes and scenery are wasted without a good book. *Sons O' Fun* is being tried out in Boston and is expected to come in here soon.

The Land Is Bright

Edna Ferber and George Kaufman have four successes on which they collaborated and which we all know—*Minnick*, *The Royal Family*, *Dinner At Eight* and *Stage Door*. I hardly think their latest, *The Land Is Bright*, will last so long. It has two acts of thrilling melodrama and one of moralizing which comes as a sad anticlimax.

The Land Is Bright deals with three generations of Kincaids, and its scenes are laid in the late Nineties, the early Twenties and in the present day. Lacey Kincaid, founder of the family fortune, is represented as the worst type of pirate who stole timber, exploited copper and pocketed railroads. The play passes in the drawing-room of his mansion on Fifth Ave., "with more rooms than the Vanderbilts'", and the first scene receives and earns a round of applause for itself. The room is crowded with incongruous objects which have nothing in common but their costliness. Naturally, the Twenties make a clean sweep of that junk.

Since each act brings a new generation on the scene, each must begin with exposition, a drawback in itself. In the first act, the old man is killed by someone whom he has cheated; at the end of the second, one of the sons is shot by a gangster, introduced into the house by one of the daughters for the sake of a thrill; and in the last act I rather hoped the head of the house would have a stroke, which seemed imminent as he fulminated against the New Deal, the European war and other topics of the times.

I thought it an amusing touch that the flapper who flirted with the gangster was sent out west to raise prize cattle instead of sowing more wild oats; but the authors

took her conversion very seriously. This part was played by Diana Barrymore. The play is good writing and good theatre but will hardly set the East River on fire.

Shakespeare

Maurice Evans will soon be here in a limited engagement in *Macbeth* with Judith Anderson as Lady Macbeth.

A pleasing production of *As You Like It* was driven off the boards by the critics after only a week's run. Helen Craig and Carol Stone played Rosalind and Celia respectively and were told off as having had no Shakespearean experience and as being over-exuberant. How are young actors to get Shakespearean experience if modestly scaled productions of the plays are to be so received? The critics themselves admitted that the performance of Jaques was one of the best of the season.

Here and There

A similar compliment, also in a failure, was made to Barbara Everest for her performance as *Anne of England*. Anne was a dull woman and the play was dull too with a good cast wasted on it.

It seems to me a pity to borrow any second-rate plays from England; our own second-raters at least speak our language! An English farce, *All Men Are Alike*, survived four weeks on the strength of Bobby Clark's personal popularity but collapsed like a pricked balloon when he had an offer to enter the cast of *The Rivals*.

Among the November offerings are Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, a farce about spiritualism; *The Walrus and the Carpenter* with Pauline Lord; Jane Cowl in *Ring Around Elizabeth*; Frederic March and Florence Eldridge in *Hope for a Harvest*. Billy Rose is to put on Clifford Odets' *Clash By Night*.

Charles Rann Kennedy, author of *The Servant in the House* and *The Terrible Meek*, has written a play about the miracle of Dunquerque called *The Seventh Trumpet*.

Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields, who did such good work in staging *My Sister Eileen* from stories in *THE NEW YORKER*, have now performed the same service for Sally Benson's *Junior Miss*. It would seem that this should make a play particularly adapted for Thespian use, doing for a girl of thirteen or fourteen what Booth Tarkington did for boys in his unforgettable *Seventeen*.

The burning questions for the American theatre are: Is there a dearth of playwrights with fresh, vital work which is worth doing. Or is there a dearth of managers with courage and imagination enough to give new writers a chance? Certainly, from the record of some of the quick failures which were written by well-known authors, it would seem as if no worse could happen if a new playwright were given an opportunity. With all the mechanical arts of the stage at their best, there should be a flood of good new plays instead of a trickle!

Robert Edmond Jones

by BARNARD HEWITT

Chairman, Dramatics Committee, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.



Prof. Hewitt

THE year 1915 marks the beginning of an era in American scene design. In that year Robert Edmond Jones designed the setting and costumes for a production of Anatole France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*. The simplicity, the purity of his design, and above all its imaginative beauty, made their mark at once, and for twenty-five years Jones has been a leader of a great creative period in scene design for the American theatre. Even those whose approach to the art is more intellectual and less intuitive acknowledge Jones' genius. Mordecai Gorelik says he gained from study with Jones an impulse toward "stark dramatic statement" which has characterized some of his own best work.

When Jones designed *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, he was bearded and he was moody. He looked like a revolutionary or like a poet. In fact he was both. Years ago, Jones told an audience at the University of California: "We have a right to be made to feel in the theatre terror and awe and majesty and rapture." Since the beginning he has been in Norris Houghton's words, "artist, a poet, a visionary." Today the beard is gone, but Jones is no less a poet. With a quarter of a century of labor behind him in a theatre that has always been far short of his ideal, Robert Edmond Jones' vision remains undimmed, his love of the theatre undiminished. In his little book of essays, *The Dramatic Imagination*, published last spring, he says the designer must "omit the details, the prose of nature and give us only the spirit and the splendor."

There was little in Jones' early life to indicate the road he was eventually to follow with such persistence and with such distinction. He was born in Milton, New Hampshire, in 1887. He received his early education in a "little white schoolhouse," and then went to Harvard, where he was graduated in 1910. Even at Harvard he displayed no special interest in the theatre, unless a devotion to Keith's vaudeville can be so regarded. Professor Baker's 47 Workshop was functioning, but Jones had no connection with it. He did a little work for the Harvard Dramatic Club, no more. He had not yet discovered his vocation. For lack of anything better to do, he became an instructor in Fine Arts at his alma mater, a position he held somewhat unhappily for two years. His real interest in design for the theatre was aroused by a ballet company he saw in

Boston and perhaps even more by the designs and writings of Gordon Craig, prophet of a new theatre. He made up his mind to go to Florence where Craig was working and teaching and study under the master. He had little or no money, but a group of close friends formed the Robert Edmond Jones Transportation and Development Company. They and others who believed in the young man bought shares, and thus in 1912 Jones found himself in Florence. When he called on Craig, he was sent away without an opportunity even to introduce himself. Terribly cast down, he went on to Berlin to the great German producer, Max Reinhardt. Reinhardt read his letters of introduction and gave him the opportunity to study and work at the Deutsches Theatre. There he remained until the outbreak of the First World War sent him home.

Soon after his success with *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, Jones became associated with Arthur Hopkins in a series of productions which some critics feel are unequalled in the American theatre before or since. With John Barrymore, then in his prime as leading actor, and with Robert Edmond Jones as designer, Hopkins produced Tolstoy's *Redemption*, Benelli's *The Jest*, Shakespeare's *Richard III* and finally a *Hamlet* which many regard as the greatest *Hamlet* of our time.

A few of the other highspots in his career have been his settings for O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Ah, *Wilderness* and *Desire Under the Elms*, Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story* and Maxwell Anderson's *Mary of Scotland*, with Helen Hayes, all for the Theatre Guild; Anderson's *Night Over Taos* for the Group Theatre; Obey's *Lucrece* with Katharine Cornell for Guthrie McClintic; and *Everywhere I Roam* and *The Green Pastures* for Marc Connelly.

Jones does not like to talk about his methods as a designer. He feels that methods are unimportant, that all designers work pretty much the same way. The designer's ideas about the theatre, the dreams that motivate his work, these rouse Jones' interest and move him to eloquence. He says the designer's task is not to build a scene but to conjure up "a sense of place". Working always by means of "allusion" rather than by "illusion," through suggestion rather than through actuality, the designer must create a feeling of expectancy: "He must strive to achieve in his settings what I can only call a high potential." This high potential is the

The fourth article in Prof. Hewitt's series will appear in our February issue.—Editor.

dramatic quality so strong in Jones' own settings. Again he has said: "A setting is a presence, a mood . . . a great warm wind fanning the drama to flame. It echoes, it enhances, it animates . . . its says nothing, but it gives everything."

When Jones sets out to design settings for a play, he does not first consider the floorplan, the probable movements of the actors, the technical problems of shifting the scenery, or even the ideas of the director. He concerns himself with the play itself, with its meaning as he can absorb it from reading the script, and above all from its mood, its special quality. When the proper rapport is established between himself and the play, his settings come to him. Suddenly as he is reading the script, the whole play appears before his mind's eye as though it were being acted out: "the people, their groupings, their clothes, the light, the background . . . in complete detail." Then all he has to do is make drawings of these pictures that have formed in his imagination. Instead of beginning with the floorplan and building his setting upon it, he starts with his setting and then anchors it to the floor. As Norris Houghton says, Jones "moves from picture to plan instead of from plan to picture."

So completely intuitive is Jones' method that he admits he has done bad settings for plays he did not like, unintentionally of course expressing his unfavorable reaction. Gilbert Seldes says Jones' settings will show up a bad play because they inevitably carry his expression of the play's quality, good or bad.

From Jones' poetic description of his art and from his intuitive method of work, one might suppose him an impractical dreamer, dreaming beautiful dreams and drawing beautiful sketches which can never be fully realized. Nothing could be further from the truth. If his imagination seems unfettered, it nevertheless functions entirely within the practical realm of the theatre. If one compares his sketches with the actual settings on the stage, one finds that there is no disparity; sketch and setting are in effect one. For *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, Jones painted the setting himself, and with his own hands cut, pinned, and basted costumes on the actors. When he designs costumes, he chooses his own fabrics, and he still fashions headdresses and fits sandals.

Actually Jones is not only an artist but a master craftsman. At the Bergman Studio which constructs and paints scenery for a large number of Broadway productions, he is known as a master of color and of light in their technical aspects. His dimensions are always right, his sketches in on time, and he will furnish hundreds of diagrams and working drawings if necessary. Joseph Vernor Reed, who was associated with Kenneth Macgowan in producing a number of Broadway plays writes of Jones' work on *Children of Darkness*: "I was favorably impressed with the fine efficiency with which



Setting by Robert Edmond Jones for Act II of *The Old Foolishness*, by Paul Vincent Carroll. A ruined castle in Ireland. This setting was not used in the Broadway production because of a change in producers. (Courtesy of Robert Edmond Jones. Photograph by Peter A. Juley and Son.)

Bobby Jones assembled the production in a few hours . . . Jones had his magnificent setting up and ready for rehearsal at the specified hour. All the props were at hand clearly tagged and marked for stage use. The lighting was arranged in an hour. The costumes fitted and were glorious." Reed supposed such efficiency was usual, he later endured the chaos which characterizes the usual Broadway dress rehearsal.

No one with Jones' sensitiveness to the written play could have remained content merely to design scenery and costumes, and he has directed the actors as well in many productions, among them *Fashion*, *Love for Love*, and *Hedda Gabler*. When the Opera House in Central City was renovated and made the seat of an annual Drama Festival, Jones was chosen to direct. There he produced *Camille* with Lillian Gish, *Othello* with Walter Houston, and the Lehar operetta, *The Merry Widow*. As a director, Jones is no tyrant; perhaps because he has a real interest in other people, he respects the ideas of his actors.

Jones' work has not been confined to plays. He has designed for the ballet and for the opera. A volume of his designs for a variety of productions has been published under the title *Drawings for the Theatre*. In 1932 he was Art Director for Radio Music Hall in New York City, designing the spectacular stage shows which are a feature of the Music Hall program. Soon after Jones went to Hollywood where he did important pioneer work in technicolor. Of the pictures for which he was responsible, *Becky Sharp* is best remembered. Jones has never used color realistically, for him "color is emotion". He uses it for mood and for drama.

He returned from Hollywood filled with admiration for the youthful energy of the workers in moving pictures and for the mechanical perfection of the industry, but he was more than ever convinced that theatre is one art and moving picture another. Many theatre workers see Hollywood as a kind of monster rapidly destroying the theatre by taking away both its audience and its artists. Jones does not share this view. He says, "Motion pictures are about to become a great liberating agent of drama. By draining the theatre of its literalness they are giving it back to imagination again."

Though Jones started a revolution in scene design and has been for twenty-five years the leader of a new movement in setting the stage, he can never be accused of glorifying scenery at the expense of the actor. On the contrary, he finds hopeful of theatre progress the recent productions without scenery: *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Julius Caesar* as produced by Orson Welles, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. In fact he says the best thing that could happen to our theatre today would be for "playwrights and actors and directors to be handed a bare stage on which no scenery could be placed, and then told that they must write and act and direct for this stage." He believes that the loveliest stage pictures are those seen by the mind's eye, and finds more power of evocation (that is one of his favorite words) in a line of Shakespeare or of Yeats than in all the stage scenery in the world.

His imagination has been caught by the use of spoken descriptions and of sound effects to set the stage for radio drama: "A magical new medium of scenic evoca-

(Continued on page 10)

Novelty Night Began at 7:30

By ELMER S. CROWLEY

Formerly, Troupe Sponsor, Madison High School, Rexburg, Idaho.

FOR four years Madison High School had sponsored Novelty Night (an evening of one-act plays and skits)—and for three of those years the program had been consistently disturbed and interrupted by late-comers. Last year, however, those late fashionables were in for a big surprise!

We announced in the school paper, in the town papers, and through the students that Novelty Night would begin promptly at 7:30, and that no one would be admitted during the acts. This was prompted by the knowledge that a late play-goer misses the point of the play anyway, and at the same time his tardy arrival creates unnecessary disturbance. Accordingly, we lettered a large sign and tacked it on the back of the main entrance door. When the doors were closed just before the program numbers began, those on the outside were confronted with this announcement:

PLEASE BE SEATED

Novelty Night Began at 7:30

Doors Will be Opened Between Acts

Playing Time of Program:

Choral Choir 7 Min.

Rehearsal 30 Min.

Jacob Comes Home 20 Min.

Thanks Awfully 40 Min.

Across the hall, and directly facing the sign, were twenty classroom chairs to accommodate those late-comers. The Superintendent cooperated in enforcing the plan by appointing two faculty members to stand outside the door during the performance. We took great care to carry out the project with the utmost courtesy.

At the conclusion of each act the doors were opened, and each time there were late customers to file in. One student even expected admittance during the last act.

To be sure, some of the townspeople who were not punctual were disturbed and one or two were indignant, but they waited outside until the doors swung open. Everyone concerned endorsed this project as an excellent lesson in punctuality, and many of those who spent from ten to thirty minutes on the outside, agreed it was the "only way."



Scene from *The Christmas Story* as produced by Thespian Troupe No. 287 at the Visitation High School, Chicago, Ill. Mr. Howard Rooney, Director. This is an all girl school.

How to Teach High School Dramatics

Unit Three—Pantomime

by KATHARINE A. OMMANNEY

Director of Dramatics, North High School, Denver, Colorado



Miss Ommanney

BECAUSE the actor is seen before he is heard or understood, our students must develop flexible, expressive bodies in order to depict emotion on the stage. There is no part of the course where we can be of greater service to them, for their posture, gesture, movement and facial expression are very vital phases of their personality. Pantomime can be given as a unit of several weeks by itself or half hour drill periods can be put in at regular intervals from the beginning of the course with a week's work in actual characterization later in the semester but preceding the work in acting. Whatever the method of presentation, the students must be made to realize that only through doing the relaxing and freeing exercises and then actually walking and sitting and standing correctly until good posture becomes subconscious, can they become ready to use their bodies as a means of expressing ideas effectively.

Relaxation is the first step. Yawning, bending, stretching, twisting until all of the muscles of the body are freed should be established as a regular morning and evening exercise. Grace is the happy medium between rigidity and flabbiness and only controlled muscles maintain balance and poise. Therefore, we should urge our students to walk in the fresh air, study fencing, dancing and gymnastics, and go out definitely for such sports as tennis and

swimming which they can keep up all their lives, thus maintaining correct techniques even in play.

Good posture should be stressed next and forever after! Make them stand easily erect, with the weight on the ball of the forward foot, chest leading, knees and arms relaxed but firm, back flat, chin at right angles to the throat and eyes looking out at their own level. Give them all possible slogans to focus on like "Think yourself tall," "Let your chest lead," "Look the world in the eye," but see that they understand that they are cultivating an easy, relaxed control of their bodies as a whole. Help them to grasp the vital importance of sitting correctly at all times, especially in study halls and classrooms, with the hips and back against the back of the chair and the chest high. Girls should be made to see how extremely necessary it is for them to sit well, especially in this prolonged age of short skirts, with their ankles crossed or one foot slightly in front of the other but never with their legs crossed, unless they are playing the part of a vulgar person on the stage. Boys should be warned not to slump and sprawl or sit like pokers, but to relax comfortably with their hands on their knees rather than with their arms folded on their chests. They should be given constant practice in sitting and rising before the class, using one foot as a lever and avoiding pushing and pulling themselves up.

Walking gracefully is easier talked about than done, have them study the perfect movement of children of about five who have not begun to set up bad habits,

noting the flat backs, high chests, free movement from the hips, graceful gestures and toeing straight ahead. Try to assist each student personally not to stride, or wobble, or mince, or wiggle, or bounce but to toe straight ahead as if walking a straight line, with the weight on the balls of the feet, the arms swinging easily at the sides, with the length of the steps regulated to the height.

This first practice is, of course, not pantomime but it is the way actors are expected to stand and move on the stage. If you remind the students that the leading roles demand grace and beauty and ease resulting from fine carriage and poised movement and that exquisite clothes are not beautiful on a twisted body, you may get quicker results. They should also learn how to open and close doors, make effective entrances and exits, move directly to their object without wandering vaguely about, and stand without fidgeting and gesticulating aimlessly.

Pantomime according to Webster is "theatrical entertainment given in dumb show," so it is literally the foundation of all stage work. It is the first technical phase of acting that students should take up and so we should make them understand that by technique we mean the skill with which any process is accomplished. This skill is never an end in itself but is the means by which a process is most efficiently or attractively carried out. In pantomime the technical rules are based upon a study of actual behavior of human beings under stress of certain emotions—because, for example, we instinctively shrink away from an object we fear and lift our arms to protect our heads and hold the hands palm outward, we say we can "register fear" by assuming that position and gesture. However, as is all characterization, knowing what you are expressing is the first step, then seeing the person whom you are portraying is the second, feeling the emotion he is feeling is next and last of all speaking or moving—think, see, feel, move is the sequence for pantomime.

I am quoting the ten general principles back of the technique of pantomime directly from my text, *The Stage and the School*,* as they are the simplest form I have found in which to express them.

1. The chest is the key to all bodily action.
2. Positive emotions expand the body.
3. Negative emotions contract the body.
4. Facial expression precedes bodily reaction.
5. Whenever possible make all gestures with the upstage arm, and avoid all tendencies to cover the face with the hands.
6. In stage work, exaggeration of bodily response is essential to its being understood by the entire audience.
7. Always keep the audience in mind and direct all facial and bodily movement front; usually keep the face toward the audience in making turns on the stage.
8. Keep the arms away from the body when gesturing. Do not ordinarily gesture above the head or below the waistline.
9. Arms and hands should always be moved in curves.
10. All movement must be definite in concept and execution, and all movement clearly motivated for both the actor and the audience. Never move or gesticulate without a reason!

These principles can first be put into practice by the class as a whole. Have them stand well apart so they can stretch and bend freely and have them go through limbering exercises until all their muscles are relaxed. Then have them stand correctly and practice moving their arms with the wrist leading in both horizontal and vertical directions. Then have them practice the movements of the hands and fingers by playing the five finger exercises in the air, making circles first with the hands from the wrist in and out, then with the arms from the elbow and then from the shoulder. You can then put words into the practice showing how we present ideas with the palms up, how we show repulsion with the palms down, and how we express emphasis with the clenched fist or the pointed index finger. They can then practice walking as a group, keeping at least three feet apart, first moving erectly and freely as they should in straight parts and then assuming character walks in accordance with periods, age, and feeling. In the same way they can practice entering the stage through a door without backing in, crossing to a chair, sitting, rising, and going out effectively in both straight and character impersonations. You can then divide them into smaller groups or couples and have them all do short scene in pantomime from Shakespeare and modern plays insisting upon grace, simplicity, expressiveness, and clarity.

Facial expression can be practiced in their seats; raising the eyebrows in surprise, contempt, and joy; drawing them down in worry, pain, and concentration; smiling, pouting and biting the lips; opening and narrowing the eyes. By these purely mechanical exercises they become conscious of the fact that the body is an expressive tool to be controlled and motivated in action, but, of course, you must warn them that in actual conversation and acting, they should avoid fidgeting

In Unit IV which will appear in our February issue, Miss Ommanney will discuss Voice and Diction.—Editor.

and making faces just to be expressing something in general, but should use their bodies simply and naturally as the fundamental means of expressing ideas.

Life studies or individual pantomimes should be the first step in characterization. For your own benefit I suggest that you read Stanislavsky's *An Actor Prepares*, if you have not done so, to get the vision of the continental artists' feeling for the importance of silent acting and then you can tell the class the fundamental points he makes. You must inspire them to get the realization of the importance of correct and effective bodily response in accordance with technical principles. As a group you may find them slipshod, careless, ineffective, if not actually silly or wooden, but you can insist upon carefully prepared individual studies in which they portray a definitely visualized person expressing a definitely felt mood under a definitely imagined situation. Encourage them to study people everywhere all the time and then go home and imitate them in front of a mirror; if you have time, you can require one imitation before the class by each student preceding the individual pantomime which involves the two processes of imitation and imagination.

The care with which you give the assignment will have much to do with the success of the pantomime work. In assigning the individual studies stress the following points: that they set their stage clearly for themselves and their audience and do not move furniture, entrances and exits or the person to whom they are speaking from the position where they originally place them without letting their action show the change; that they show the size, shape, weight of every object they pretend to lift; that they visualize the character in detail as to age, size, clothing, mood, relation to the imaginative setting and other characters, and to the shifting emotional responses to the ideas of

the pantomime; that they keep the action simple, natural, effective, clear cut and visible to the entire audience; that they make only one movement at a time and that it be co-ordinated with the entire body; that they plan the pantomime with the greatest care—the introduction in words with which they make clear their ideas and setting and every step of the action and its correct bodily presentation and an effective ending; that they rehearse hours, if necessary, in order that they attain perfection as nearly as possible with every movement being the result of careful thinking, visualizing, and feeling.

The last phase should be group pantomimes in which groups of not more than five students work out a study involving interesting and contrasted characters in a situation which grows into a highly emotional climax. A study of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* will give them an idea of what you expect of them. In assigning the group studies, be sure that you explain the importance of a carefully balanced stage picture, a center of interest at every moment, action so planned that it is visible to the entire audience, and a situation that is really worth working with because it has real dramatic and emotional content. They are always inclined to have girls giving parties in dormitories or boys playing cards ending in cheating and killing! This is one of our first opportunities to inspire them to do original creative thinking.

In all the work with pantomime emphasize timing of action; the students are always too fast, rushing through the study with blurred and ineffective movements. Try to force them to respond first with the glance of the eye, then the facial expression and then the bodily response in the effort to have them coordinate the entire body and cultivate fluid unified motion. We cannot be too meticulous in this work, for we all know only too well that the tendency today in all classwork is toward a superficial effectiveness based on an attractive exterior manner and this is one of our big opportunities to show the value of perfection in detail.



Scene from the play, *Little Women*, as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 79 at the Millersburg, Pa., High School. Directed by Mrs. Emma Mary Hubsch.

* With special permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

Peru and Its Drama

by WILLIS KNAPP JONES

Department of Romanic Languages, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

FEW nations pack into the pages of their history more of the elements of "good theatre" than Peru. Somewhere between seacoast and Andean summits, the country provides every sort of romantic background from the lush tropics to the eternal snows. Its history is full of vivid personalities, including Pizarro who with his 150 soldiers conquered an empire of ten million inhabitants stretching 2,500 miles along the Pacific Coast, and Ambrose O'Higgins, Irish peddler who brought all his possessions in a bundle on his back and lived to be the jewel-bedecked Viceroy of the colony with a salary of 60,000 pesos a year.

Peru abounds in clashes of interest: Spaniards never understanding the Indians; natives in bloody revolt against the whites; American-born whites rebelling against the Spanish-born population. Dip into Peru's history anywhere, and you come up with all that is needing for gripping drama.

Why, then, has Peru not been a leader in the development of the Hispanic American theatre?

Its early inhabitants achieved the highest intellectual level of any Indians on the American continent. They alone domesticated any animals. As agriculturalists, the Incas gave us at least thirty important plants, including squash, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, corn, cacao (chocolate) and tobacco. Their doctors knew the source of quinine and cocaine. Their surgeons, with only bronze knives, practiced trepanning.

Spanish colonists, coming later, also represented a high state of culture. At a time when Henry VIII was reigning in England, and the Pilgrim Fathers were still unborn, they made Lima the intellectual center of South America and the seat of the continent's oldest college, the University of San Marcos which antedates by three-quarters of a century any college in the United States.

When Pizarro founded Lima, in 1535, the Spanish theatre was in its infancy, for Spain's first play was presented in Salamanca on Christmas, 1492. Lima was thirty years old before any collection of plays was published in Spain, so we can understand why, even with wealth, intelligence and an interest in literature, we cannot expect much of a theatrical tradition in the Sixteenth Century. What does seem strange is that Peru's first efforts were so crude that in 1582 the Peruvian Council prohibited comedies based on religious themes, and in 1598 extended the decree of abolishment of Spain's theatre to in-



Prof. Jones

clude all South America as well. Still strolling companies continued to play the provinces and shortly this edict was rescinded.

By the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, however, Peruvian colonists developed an interest in drama. In 1603, Lima had its first "coliseo" with a stage formed of three bare boards. Moncloa, in his volume *Teatro en Lima* mentions the "tawdry drapes often blown by the wind which sweeps through the corral, blowing hair and flattening ruffs."

"The audience occupied benches with backs, close to the stage. Others stood in the rest of the corral. A cloth without any allegorical painting was used as a curtain, and the actors wore finery which had little relation to the plays presented."

"The scenery consisted of various curtains hanging at the rear, with openings for entrances and exits, and without any painting or decoration so that the audience had to imagine whether the curtain represented a street, a jail, or a parlor."

To provide plays for this stage, as well as for the little stages in convents and other buildings, printed editions came from Spain. Professor Irving Leonard discovered logs of some of the Silver Fleets which contain lists of books in their cargos. For instance, in 1605, the galleon "Nuestra Señora del Rosario" brought sixty-one cases of books (163 different titles), the property of Juan de Sarria, a bookseller of Alcalá de Henares, where the first edition of *Don Quixote* had just been published, and consigned to his son at Porto Bello, Panama, and to his partner Miguel Méndez, bookseller of Lima.

To pay the freight charges across the Isthmus, young Sarria had to sell eight cases of books. Lack of space on his chartered south-bound vessel compelled him to abandon eight more boxes on the dock at Old Panama. Only 2,895 volumes finally reached Callao and Lima.

Seventy-five percent of the shipment were ecclesiastical volumes, but there were also sixty-three plays, including nine by Lope de Vega published the year before. And this was only one of the ships which kept amateur actors in the New World in touch with theatrical novelties of Madrid.

With the construction of what contemporaries called the "imposing coliseum" of 1662, a few local dramatists appeared. In 1669, during the viceregency of the Count of Lemos, a comedy about Santa Rosa, the New World's only saint, was performed. Occasionally, too, viceroys took time from the press of duties as ruler of a continent, to toss off a play.

The drama and theatre in Mexico will be the subject of Prof. Jones' fourth article which will be published in our February number.—Editor.

The Marquis de Castell dos Rius, representative of King Philip V between 1707 and 1710, remodeled a salon of his palace into a theatre which he inaugurated with his own play *La comedia harmónica, el mejor escudo de Perseo*, based on Greek mythology. One critic, not dependent of royal favor for his living, reported the effort a "scenic monstrosity in detestable poetry". The original seems to have disappeared.

Acting as a sort of poet laureate during this period was the foremost literary figure of colonial Peru, Pedro de Peralta Bar-nuevo (1663-1743). In delving into the literary life of Peru, Professor Leonard tracked down and published three of Peralta's plays. One is an adaptation of Corneille's tragedy *Rodogune*, about a mother and a girl who so hated one another that each tried to turn two sons into an assassin of the other woman. Except for the dramatic last act, it is a dreary piece in Spanish as in French.

More lively are the other two. When Diego Ladrón de Guevara left the bishopric of Quito to become Viceroy of Peru (1710-16) and when the archbishop of La Paz, Diego Morcillo Rubio de Auñón, viceroy in 1716 and from 1720 to 1724, demanded entertainment, Peralta provided them with *Triunfos de amor y poder* (*Triumphs of Love and Power*) and *Afectos vencen finezas* (*Affection is Better than Attractiveness*). He gave such impetus to drama that it carried along to the reign of a later Viceroy, Manuel de Amat y Junient (1761-76).

Without ever writing a single line of drama, Amat popularized the Peruvian stage as none of his predecessors had done. He sponsored an actress. Their story is another romance of this romantic country.

Micaela Villegas was a *chola*, or mixture of Spanish and Indian blood, born in 1740 in the Andean village of Huánuco. At the age of five, her mother took her to Lima where she studied singing, declaiming, and etiquette, and eventually got her chance to appear on the stage.

That was in 1761, the year that Manuel de Amat, a sixty year old bachelor, was summoned from Chile to replace the retiring Viceroy. Like earlier governors, Amat was fond of the theatre and the first time the old soldier saw La Villegas, he became equally fond of her.

According to the Laws of the Indies, no Viceroy could marry anyone born in the territory over which he ruled, but there was no doubt of Amat's infatuation for this halfbreed actress. He built her a lovely town house and tried to persuade her to perform for him alone, but the drama was too much a part of her.

For eleven years Amat showered her with presents while all the aristocrats who dared, sneered at the "*chola*". They commented on her background and on the marks of smallpox on her skin, yet they surrendered to her witchery on the stage when she recited the mighty lines of Moreto or Caldón.

Then came her downfall, all so typically Spanish.

La Villegas and her leading man, Maza, had been at odds for some time. Rumor had it that Maza was grooming the company's ingenue for leading rôles. One night, in a play by Calderón, *Fuego de Dios (God's Fire)* Maza commented on the lack of fire of the actress. "Play harder!" he whispered during an emotional scene. "Inesilla could do this a hundred times better!"

The actress had a whip in her hand and she promptly lashed it across the face of her insulter. A North American audience would have thought little of the incident, but by the Spanish Code of Honor, a display of anger in the presence of the King's representatives was an insult to the King. The Viceroy got up and left the theatre, with most of the audience following his example.

That night Amat and his royal coach visited Micaela Villegas. Perhaps by now he was tired of her. She was no longer the slim girl he had once known. Age brings avoidpouiso to so many Spanish women, and La Villegas was a third of a century old. Perhaps he was merely hurt because of her breach of etiquette. Manlike, he took his hurt out on her.

"Adiós, Perra chola!" he spit at her. "Farewell, you half-breed dog!"

To those who listened, the epithet sounded like "perricholi" and the actress was promptly christened "Perricholi" by all her enemies. Merimée, hearing the story, put Perricholi into his *Carrosse du Saint Sacrement*. The American novelist, Thornton Wilder, brought her to life again in *Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

Actually, no fiction writer was required for the renascence of this actress who for thirteen years had been the theatrical favorite of Lima. As time passed, theatre-going Lima missed her. Inesilla was not the sensation that Maza had hoped.

The Viceroy missed her too, and one day, after the royal coach had paid an

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unexpected and lengthy visit to her town house, La Villegas announced that she would return to the stage and, instead of her old name, she would select the one bandied about Lima as an insult: "La Perricholi".

What a night! Amat sat in the royal box glittering with the decorations that proclaimed his status as Gentleman of His Majesty's Bedchamber, Knight of the Order of San Juan, Comendador of Calatrava, and so on, and so forth. As the actress who had once been his sweetheart appeared on the stage, he set the tone for her reception by shouting: "Have courage and sing well, Perricholi!"

She did. Lima had never seen such an ovation. After that night, Perricholi went on to one triumph after another. Her viceregal protector, now almost eighty, was summoned back to Madrid in 1776, but La Perricholi remained in Lima, the chief figure in theatrical circles.

Eventually, when she was nearly sixty, she married a fellow actor, Vicente de Echarry, but still she did not abandon the theatre. A document dated Oct. 1, 1783, bears witness that the couple had leased the Royal Coliseum and were managing it together. Much later, well along in the new century, La Perricholi made her will, bestowing most of her wealth upon her brother, her son Manuel de Amat, and his daughter. The rest, after reserving just enough money to bury her and provide four candles for her funeral, was for the poor.

After her death, other actresses were found. In the Lima paper, *Diario*, dated

July 23, 1792, a manager advertised for a "good-looking girl trained in singing and acting" and promised, in addition to her regular salary a bonus ("glove money" says the advertisement) of 200 pesos or more.

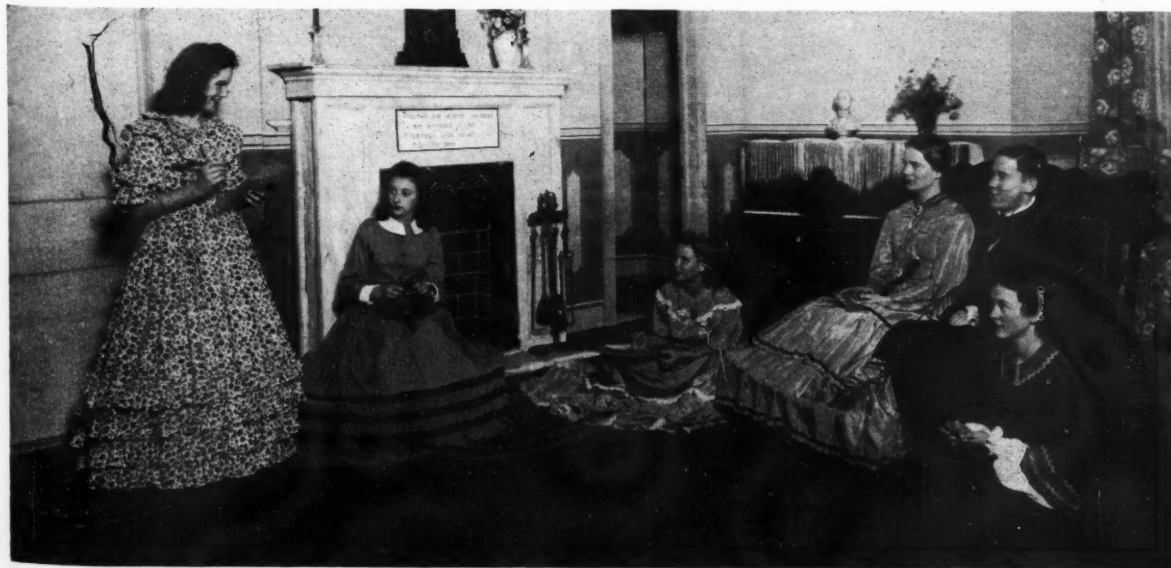
These daily papers are source for much interesting detail. In one issue, December 9, 1790, comes an advertisement explaining that the late beginnings of plays are due, not to the actors, but to the audience which would not arrive before 7:30, though play bills declare plainly that the curtain would rise at 7:00, except when the Viceroy attended. A month later, worn out, the manager announces curtain time at 7:30 regularly.

For the most part, Spanish plays continued to supply the fare, with Moreto the most popular author. Then came the 19th century when Peru was too busy fighting for its independence to think about drama or dramatists. Yet during these troubled times, two men were born whose plays were to be more truly Peruvian than any by authors who had preceded them.

One was Felipe Pardo y Aliaga (1806-68). When the patriots drove his father from his position as Regent of the Royal Audiencia of Cuzco, the family returned to Spain where Felipe's tutor was the famous pedagogue Alberto Lista. Later, after the hostility against Spaniards had died down, Pardo returned to Lima and took up play writing as a means of educating the Peruvians.

His three-act comedy, *Frutos de la educación*, ridicules parents who try to supply their daughters with husbands. In a play in 1833, set in a seaside resort, he pokes fun at a foppish Don Quintin who aped French customs so thoroughly that he could not even talk his own language. As punishment, he loses the heiress he has been courting. A third comedy, *Don Leocadio*, takes another crack at Peruvian customs of which Pardo did not approve.

Much more a *costumbrista* or describer



Scene from *Little Women* as given by Thespian Troupe No. 122 at Newport News, Va., High School. Directed by Miss Dorothy M. Crane. Compare with picture of this same production published in our October issue.



Scene from the one-act play, *The Last Curtain*, winner of a local play contest at Casper, Wyo. Produced by Thespian Troupe No. 1 at the Natrona County High School. Miss Beulah B. Bayless, director.

of customs, and less a would-be reformer than Pardo, was the greatest of early Peruvian dramatists Manuel Ascencio Segura (1805-1871).

As a veteran of the wars between 1836 and 1839, when Chile and disgruntled Peruvians were trying to keep the Bolivian Santa Cruz from reviving a confederation that once composed the Inca Empire, Segura knew that most Peruvians had come out of the struggle with a dislike of soldiers. So he began his dramatic career with a one-act play in verse, *Sargento Canuto*, poking fun at all soldiery by portraying boastful Sergeant Canuto, in love with Jacoba, daughter of a bull-fight enthusiast, Sempronio. However the girl loves a civilian and after several amusing and slap-stick incidents, the conceited soldier is put in his place.

Segura's second play, three years later, takes its name *Saya y manto* from the billowy skirt and the shawl worn by Lima women. It narrates the adventures of fickle Mariano in his courting of the widow Rosa who disguises herself by the heavy veil. Unlike the plays of Pardo, this has no moral. It is merely a lively picture of political and love intrigue during the time of the "protector" Santa Cruz, and is a far cry from the allegorical

loas or one-act plays of the colonial theatre.

Another play by Segura is *Las tres viudas* (*Three Widows*) full of complications and secret marriages. The heroine of another play, *La Moza mala*, gets her title of "Bad Girl" because against her father's commands, she flirts through the iron gratings of her window. *Lances de Amancaes* describes St. John's Day festivities at Amancaes, the gathering spot for half of Lima. And so his plays go, full of the costumes and customs of his time, so that it was very fitting that Ricardo Palma, Peru's greatest literary figure and writer of traditions, should edit the plays of Peru's chief costumbrista dramatist.

Since Segura's death, in 1871, Peru has not made much progress in drama. Several women of the nation have tried their hands at plays. Clorinda Matto de Turner, one of Peru's greatest novelists, wrote a three-act prose drama about the Incas, called *Hima Sumac* (1884), though it remained for the Argentine Ricardo Rojas to present Peru's original inhabitants in their most literary form, in his rewriting of the old *Ollanta* play, mentioned in the first article of this series. Carolina Freire de Jaimes delved into the history of her country for a couple of four-

act poetic dramas about women, *Maria de Vellido* (1878) and *Blanca de Silva* (1879).

Among other Peruvian playwrights were Trinidad Pérez with *El emigrado español* (*The Spanish Emigrant*) and *La industria y el poder* (*Industry and Power*). Two others with long lists of plays are Acisclo Villarán and Manuel Moncloa y Vovarubias, also historian of Peruvian actors and theatres.

The man who would have occupied highest place among contemporary Peruvian dramatists, had he remained in Peru and written about Peruvian themes, is Felipe Sassone (1884), son of Italians. In most of his plays, set and written in Spain, critics see Benavente-like plots with the melodramatic solutions of an Echeagaray. Sassone's masterpiece, *Lo que llevan las horas* (*Changes Wrought by Time*) deals with Argentines planning to return to Buenos Aires, but everything happens in Madrid. *El miedo de los felices* (*The Fear of the Fortunate Ones*) saw a Buenos Aires production a year before its Madrid premiere, but most of Sassone's plays, including that other important drama, *Calla, corazón* (*Be Still, My Heart*), were written in Spain.

With this magician of theatrical technique classified as Spanish, the position of number one Peruvian dramatist is disputed by several. José Chioino makes his claim with what Bernard Shaw might have written about the social rights of geniuses, had he lived in Peru. It is called *Retorno* (*The Return*).

Humberto del Águila has two interesting modern plays. *La dama blanca* (*The White Lady*) deals with superstitions among inland Indians. The cynical *Triunfadores* (*Conquerors*) preaches the necessity of looking after number one.

I have not been able to read any plays by the "insuperable genius" Leonidas Yerovi, nor have I seen a Biblical play by Ciro Alegria, recent winner of first prize for the best novel from Hispanic America. But at least these names must be added to the increasing galaxy of modern-day Peruvians who are turning to the theatre to interpret that paradoxical land of Peru.

Robert Edmond Jones

(Continued from page 5)

tion is waiting to be pressed into service. Imagine a voice pervading a theatre from all directions at once, enveloping us, whispering to us of scenes 'beautiful as pictures no man drew' . . ." Radio drama suggests to him another revolutionary idea: Why should setting remain all through the play? Why should it not as on the radio be a kind of introduction, a "transitory show of things" revealed momentarily at the beginning, then drawn away, leaving the stage entirely to the actors.

Gilbert Seldes once wrote, "What happens to Jones is ultimately what happens to the American theatre." If this is true, the American theatre will continue to be an exciting theatre.



Scene from the mystery play, *Black Wings*, as staged by Thespian Troupe No. 111 at the Burley, Idaho, High School. Mr. E. J. Ryan, director.

Streamline Your Play!

by TED SKINNER

Sponsor, Troupe No. 60, Boulder, Colorado, Senior High School

WITH everything from locomotives to women's hats being streamlined, it is only logical that a director should come along with the suggestion to streamline the high school play. The suggestion is made that the usual four to six weeks' rehearsal period be reduced to one week in length. At the Boulder Senior High School we have presented plays after one week's rehearsal, and have found the plan to be most satisfactory. This reduction in time is made possible by holding rehearsals during school time with the students being excused from classes for five school days. During this rehearsal period the director's classes are taught by a substitute who is paid by the school district.

Let us assume that we are planning to present our fall play on Friday, October 24, 1941. Naturally, the play will be selected soon after the opening of school. About October 1, an announcement will be made to the student body that try-outs will be held beginning Monday, October 6. All wishing to try out will be asked to report at the first try-out session, at which time a list will be compiled of all wishing a part in the play. A copy of this list will be placed in the mailbox of each faculty member who will check the list indicating those students who are not eligible to participate in the play. Additional try-outs will be held during the week with the cast being announced on Friday, October 10, two weeks before the date of the play. A reading rehearsal of the play will be held at the time the cast is announced in order that they may get a picture of the play as a whole, and to afford an opportunity to indicate any script changes before lines are learned. During the week between the casting of the play and the beginning of regular rehearsals, the cast members will be expected to learn their lines.

On Thursday afternoon, October 16, at the close of school, the blocking out rehearsal will be held for Act I. Rehearsals will be held all day Friday during which time Acts II and III will be blocked out with repeats of all three acts. The cast members will be allowed to use books during the blocking out rehearsals. At the Saturday morning rehearsal, the entire play will be run through once without books. Additional rehearsals will be held during the day and evening on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The evening rehearsals will be used to put the show together, with hand props being required for Monday evenings, hand and set props for Tuesday, and dress rehearsals on Wednesday and Thursday. By this time the play should be ready for the

A Thought for Thespians

By NELLE WESTON

Sponsor Thespian Troupe 11, Park County High School, Livingston, Mont.

When young Will Shakespeare played the ghost

Or sang of love divine,
Ben Johnson pledged him in a toast
Of rare Canary wine.

The Mermaid Tavern's far away,
In ancient London town,
But still, young actors love to play
In cap and bells, or crown.

On some high star behind Jove's seat,
Great Will's ghost, looking down,
Drinks, from a cup of nectar sweet,
A toast—to king or clown!

performance on Friday, October 24.

It will be necessary to keep in mind that in using this plan, it is most important that the scenery construction be begun early enough so that the set will be available by the time rehearsals begin. It will also be necessary to begin publicity, ticket sales, and similar jobs well in advance of rehearsals.

There are many advantages in this plan of play rehearsal, the first being that it is a big time saver. Much more can be accomplished at rehearsals when the cast members report with lines learned. Then again, time is saved in that rehearsals are long enough to block out an act and repeat it two or three times in order to get the business definitely set before going on to another act. Also, there is a more business-like attitude on the part of the cast when rehearsals are held on school time. Attendance is absolutely no problem.

The plan presents another advantage in that the play gets better directing from a director who is relieved of trying to teach five or six classes while producing a play. Also, the classes get better instruction from a competent substitute teacher during the duration of the play than from a teacher who is trying to do both. We have found that our students actually lose less in their academic work under the one-week plan than they did when their major concern was with the play during a four or five weeks' period. Now that the plan has been in effect for three years, most of the students hand in their make-up work before rather than after rehearsals.

Some directors might feel that working up a play in such a few days would lower the quality of the performance. If I did not believe this plan improved the type of performance, I should not favor it. Because rehearsals are concentrated in a shorter period, and because the cast members live their parts during this time, I have found that it is impossible to give a much smoother performance. Also, it might be thought that the plan would limit the choice of plays, but the following list of plays presented at the Boulder Senior High School will indicate that both simple and difficult types are possible: *You Can't Take It With You*, *Growing Pains*, *Captain Applejack*, *Our Town*, 320 College Avenue, *Remember the Day*, *What A Life!*, *Beggar On Horseback*, *Young April*, *Love From A Stranger*, and *Under the Gaslight*.

There are other phases of this one week plan of rehearsal, but space does not permit further discussion. However, I will be glad to correspond with any directors wishing additional information.

So, as you view your year's program of plays, why not plan to streamline your first play by reducing your rehearsal period to one week on school time. I like the plan. I think many of you might also like it.



Scene from *The Christmas Gift*, written and directed by Miss Jane Marsh, Thespian Sponsor at the Keokuk, Iowa, High School. A production of the drama class, 1940.

Sophocles, the Complete Dramatist

by FRED C. BLANCHARD

Director of Dramatics, Woodrow Wilson Junior College, Chicago, Ill.

LET me give you a picture of an imaginary contemporary playwright. This dramatist, now almost ninety years of age, has written over a hundred plays. He has been writing continuously for sixty years. During many theatrical seasons, his plays have been considered the finest written by any American. He was himself an actor, and in his youth an accomplished dancer and musician. He has superintended his own theatrical productions, and has been the originator of significant changes both in playwriting and staging. He is successful and wealthy. He has been richly rewarded for his playwriting, and is of a family of wealthy munitions makers. He has been a high official in the church. He has taken a prominent part in public life, having served on foreign embassies. Twice, during critical times, he served as a general in the United States Army. Even in his old age, he is handsome and well-favored. Wise, gentle, reverent, charming and successful, he is respected and beloved by the whole country.



Prof. Blanchard

We can scarcely imagine a modern playwright with so many accomplishments and achievements, but such a description could have been truly written about Sophocles in the years before his death in 406 B. C. He was born in Colonus, a suburb of Athens, in 495 B. C., the son of a rich farmer. His education was thorough, and as was common then, included instruction in dancing, music and athletics. Because of his skill and physical beauty, he was chosen to lead a chorus of boys to celebrate the victory of Salamis in 480 B. C. He was a fine musician and did some acting in his early years. Acting, however, he is said to have given up because of a weak voice. He took a prominent part in civic, military and religious life. In all he did, he was touched by success. But it is as a dramatist that he interests us, for he was one of the great playwrights of all time.

Like other Greek dramatists, he directed his own plays at the festivals. Certain improvements in staging are attributed to him; Aristotle says that he was the first to use painted scenery. He is said to have written with definite actors in mind for his plays, as did Shakespeare and Moliere. It has also been said that he formed an association for the promotion of liberal culture in Athens. Greatest of his innovations was the introduction of the third

actor, a device which meant greater freedom in plot and action and a diminishing position of the chorus.

Sophocles composed about a hundred plays, and won the prize at the great festival eighteen times. Of these plays, only seven have survived. In all of them, he accepted and freely used the legends of the heroes of Greece. These stories constitute the basis of his plots. Chief characteristics of his dramatic treatment are unity of effect, perfection of plot, melodious sweetness and nobility of language.

He lived in the great period of Athens—the age of Pericles. Under Pericles, the ideal of a Greek city was realized, as never before or since. Great architecture and sculpture abounded, and gave the Greek citizen a full sense of beauty and pleasure. Athens was wealthy; riches poured into the capital from all parts of the empire. Visitors came from afar to view the glories of the city and to enjoy the theatre festivals. Supported by wealth and labor from dominated lands, the Greeks had leisure to enjoy art, literature and theatre. Citizens like Sophocles were proud of their city and participated actively in its political life. True, the great empire began to disintegrate during the late years of Sophocles' life. Perhaps some of the sadness of his last play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, can be attributed to his recognition of that fact. But even in that play there are passages of great beauty in praise of Athens. The nature and successful artist, Sophocles lived in a mature and successful city. His life coincided with the greatest period of Athens. Sophocles lived amid the glory that was Greece, and was a part of it.

Let us undertake a resume of several of his plays. Many scholars believe that *Antigone* is the earliest play of Sophocles which remains to us. It was produced about 441 B. C., when the poet was already an experienced artist. There is a story that because of the political wisdom in the play, Sophocles was soon thereafter elected as a general.

You may remember the story of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. The sons of Oedipus, King of Thebes, had killed each other contending for the crown, and Creon, their uncle, had become ruler. Creon had decreed that the body of Polynices, the apparent aggressor, should be denied burial. This order, deeply repugnant to Greek religious feeling, was especially distressing to Antigone, one of

Polynices's sisters. As the play begins, she reveals to Ismene, the second sister, her plan to perform burial rites for their dead brother. Ismene, more gentle than Antigone, counsels submission. But in a scene which develops sharp conflict despite sisterly affection, Antigone re-asserts her determination. As they leave, the chorus of Theban senators expresses approval of the king. Like most choruses in Sophocles' plays, this one is moderate and dispassionate. Creon repeats his order about Polynices' body. The following scene is unusual in that it seems definitely humorous. A sentinel, whose dilatory methods of story telling remind the reader of Juliet's nurse, finally manages to inform the king that the body has been covered with earth. It is soon discovered that Antigone is the culprit who has defied the king. Creon decrees that she shall be buried alive in a remote cave. Haemon, son of Creon and affianced to Antigone, appeals for mercy. Father and son engage in an acrimonious debate on the rights of rulers, but Creon is adamant. Haemon leaves, vowing that he will never be seen again. Creon is finally persuaded by the chorus and by Tiresias, a seer. He hurries off to see that the body of Polynices is buried and Antigone then released. But his decision comes too late. Antigone has hanged herself; Haemon has followed her in death; Creon's wife has committed suicide in grief over her son's death. Creon, contrite and stricken, is left alone. The chorus, grave and impersonal as ever, observes that only by the harsh blows of fate do men come to wisdom. As can be seen, the play has an exciting and complicated plot.

Ajax, believed by some to be earlier in date than *Antigone*, concerns the death of one of the Greek heroes of the siege of Troy. The armor of the dead Achilles had been given to Odysseus, and Ajax was indignant at the implied slur on his prowess. At the beginning of the play, we learn that the goddess Athena had put a fit of madness on Ajax. As a result, he had the night before killed a number of sheep and cattle in the belief that he was slaying those leaders who had insulted him. When Ajax first appears, he still is under Athena's spell and is gloating over his revenge. He soon returns to sanity, and is mortified by his own actions. He realizes that he is now the object of scorn and derision in the eyes of gods and men. He speaks of death, and bids farewell to his captive-wife and son. Later, he pretends to have been moved by the appeals of his wife, and informs the chorus that he will not take his own life. Instead, he will go to the seashore, bury his sword, and make peace with his enemies. The audience realizes, of course, that he still plans to kill himself. The scene then moves to a lonely place on the shore. After a touching speech, he falls upon his sword. The death on stage is unusual; most of such scenes in Greek drama occur off stage. At least the last third of the play is concerned with an argument about the

"Euripides: a Modern Playwright" will be the subject of a fourth article by Prof. Blanchard which we shall publish in the February issue.—Editor.



Cast and stage set for *What a Life*, a production of Thespian Troupe No. 147 at the Hillsborough High School, Tampa, Fla. Directed by Miss Thelma Jones.

disposition of the body of Ajax. It is at last decided by Odysseus that the body shall be given an honorable burial. This incident suggests, again, as in *Antigone*, the importance attached to proper funeral rites. The theme is strange, its development up to the death of Ajax is rapid. The character of Ajax—a great man fallen into dishonor because of the enmity of a god—is a familiar one and powerfully drawn. Other characters are definite and actual. In general though, this play is probably of less interest to the student than some others.

Oedipus the King is Sophocles' version of a part of the famous story of the royal family of Thebes. The tragic and terrible events of the life of Oedipus, Theban king, were used by all three great dramatists. Only the play of Sophocles has been preserved. Aristotle believed that this play was the greatest of Greek tragedies.

The play opens with Oedipus as the king of Thebes, happy and successful. But as events proceed we soon see that he is doomed to a tragic end. The city is under a curse because the slayer of Laius, former king, is said to be within its gates. The chorus of Theban senators implores Oedipus to take action which will help the citizens. Oedipus swears to find the murderer. Gradually, by the agency of seers and messengers and by revelations made by Oedipus and his wife, Jocasta, we learn the events of the past and the inevitability of doom for Oedipus. He believed himself to be the son of the king of Corinth, but because a prophet had told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother, he had fled from Corinth to avoid fulfillment of the prophecy. On his way to Thebes, he had quarreled with some travelers, and killed several of them. Arriving at Thebes, he rid the city of the curse of the Sphinx. In gratitude, the people made him king, and he married Jocasta, Laius' widow. We learn, too, that when a son had been born to Jocasta and Laius the same direful prophecy had been made. To avoid this, the parents had sent the child with a shepherd, to be exposed in the wilderness. The child had supposedly died, but instead he had been given to a shepherd

of Corinth, taken to the king, and raised as a royal prince. The enemy of the city is Oedipus himself.

There is a great sense of suspense as these facts are brought to light. At last, Jocasta kills herself and Oedipus puts out his own eyes. Oedipus entrusts his four children to Creon, Jocasta's brother, and leaves to wander the earth as a piteous outcast. The horrible nature of some of the events may make the play unpalatable to modern audiences, but none can deny the mastery of the playwright in handling the material, nor the overwhelming effect as action follows action to an inevitable conclusion.

Oedipus at Colonus, the work of the poet's old age, is the story of the blind and aged Theban king, long after his exile. It has been prophesied that the country which harbors his body will be great and powerful. As the play opens, Oedipus and his faithful daughter Antigone have just arrived at a sacred grove at Colonus (Sophocles' own birthplace), within the precincts of the King of Athens. The chorus of elders warns him that he must not remain, as the grove is sacred. Theseus, King of Athens, arrives to offer sanctuary to the wanderer. Ismene, Oedipus' other daughter, enters and tells him that the Thebans now want him to return, as prophets have said that his presence would be lucky to the country. Creon, Theban King, also demands his return. When he refuses, Creon, angered, attempts to carry off the daughters, but is prevented by Theseus. Polynices, one of the sons, comes to ask his father's aid in the coming war against his usurping brother. Oedipus dismisses him, with dire prophecies of death. At the end, he realizes that his own life is about to close. He then goes up into the mountains, to meet his death. Presence of his body there will give Athens great fortune always. The final scenes, descriptive of the death of Oedipus, are imaginative and exciting. Oedipus goes to meet the gods with nobility and courage. His tragic experiences have given him strength and tranquility.

You may have neither the time nor the inclination to read all of the plays of Sophocles. But I think you will really

enjoy becoming acquainted with the work of this great dramatist. My advice to you is to read the three plays about the ruling family of Thebes, and to read them in this order—*Oedipus the King*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Don't read them because some one said you should, but just because they are exciting dramatic stories. There are many good translations, and your school or city library is certain to have them on the shelves.

Sophocles is completely typical of what we conceive to be the spirit of classical Greece. His work is restrained, wise, moderate. Never does he go to excess, in method or language. Even in his most violent plays, he is simply using old, well-known stories. And even more than his colleagues, he accepts these stories fully. He recognizes the power of the gods, and with an air of quiet resignation, accepts whatever fate they have determined. As we have seen, the choruses, which can sometimes be thought of as the special mouthpiece of the author, do not enter the dramatic conflict. They stand apart, commenting upon the action with reasonable calm. When characters are in conflict, they point out the valid parts of each side of the argument and often suggest the wisdom of a moderate course. It is this moderation, this classic calm, which even the layman thinks of as representative of the great age of Greece.

Sophocles is the perfect and complete dramatic artist. The great strength of Aeschylus is refined and polished into a thoroughly mastered form. Even a new reader of Greek plays can readily detect this difference between the two writers. Sophocles shows interest in dramatic irony, in vigorous conflicts, in sharp dialogue. Incidents of action are arranged in unified theatrical patterns. Action is brought on the stage, not related. With Sophocles, plot as we know it came into existence. Yet all these things are not the most important feature of Sophocles' dramatic writing. As many critics have pointed out, he is, most of all, a creator of character. His characters are flesh-and-blood men and women, living their own lives, speaking their own language.

Speak to be Heard

by MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

Director for the Division of Speech, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.



Prof. Franklin

I SUPPOSE no one thing disappoints members of our audiences so much as being unable to hear. They want to see but they also want to hear the plays.

Since you players are working for effects I realize you don't like the idea of shouting your lines. You may be working for beauty in a quiet romance, or secrecy in a spooky mystery, or just a pleasant conversation with friends in a play. Consequently you speak the lines as you feel them and too often you cannot be heard. That is not fair. You can keep the mood and still *speak to be heard*.

Some voices lack that penetrating quality, others are too thin, or too soft, or too heavy to carry well. But the difficulty can more often be attributed to careless enunciation. Every thought of the play should be projected and it can be if each word is spoken *to its last letter* with precision.

Here are some helps:

1. Bring out clearly all final consonants: "We helpe*d* the*M* do i*T*." "IN spi*T*e o*F* al*L* we cou*L*D thin*K*."
2. Keep up, and *loud*, the last four words of your speech. Don't run down like a phonograph.
3. Speak groups of words together and pause between groups. This allows the audience to get thoughts separated. Speak no more than four or six words in a group.
4. Clip words short. Make them staccato. Are you one of those who muffles and blurs the edges of words? If so, you need to learn to bite off each word. We Americans are notoriously slovenly in our speech, but players dare not be. They must clean and brighten up our language with precision of speech.
5. Talk louder. This is the last requirement. Speak out with push and volume, but don't depend upon volume to make your voice heard. Use every other help, then volume.

VOICES should seem to be low in the following scenes, but you must be able to be heard in a large, bare room. Work until you can be understood without shouting the lines. Work out of doors if possible; no better laboratory can be found than the football field. Keep practicing your scrimmages until you can play to win.

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Family Portrait*

(*Family Portrait* is a play dealing with the family of Jesus. The neighbors and members of His immediate family look upon Jesus with disapproval because of His unusual work. Mary is deeply troubled.)

RABBI (*Sits on tree bench*): What we've come to say isn't very pleasant, Mary. The quicker we get to it the better. (*Removes hat—puts it L. of him. MARY sits chair. (Pauses, then turns to MENDEL):* Mendel shall I go on?

MENDEL (*Relieved—crosses L. between and above them*): Glad to have you.

RABBI: Aaron has called off the marriage between Judah and Miriam.

MARY: Called it off!

RABBI: Yes.

MARY: But why?

MENDEL (*Reluctantly*): Your family is getting a bad reputation.

(*A long Pause*)

RABBI (*Barely audible*): Because of Jesus! MARY: Oh, but that's so unfair! Why should the boy suffer for his brother?

MENDEL: That's just what we said to Aaron. MARY: What did he say?

MENDEL: That things like this run in families. You can't tell where they'll break out next.

MARY (*Indignantly*): And we're supposed to sit here and do nothing... well, I won't. (*Rises—crosses almost to gate*): I'll go to Aaron myself.

RABBI: It's no use. Mary. (*MARY stops*). He's closed his shop and taken his family away.

MARY (*At gate—a little bitterly*): Didn't even give us a chance to defend ourselves.

(*The Rabbi and Mendel exchange a look. MENDEL signals the Rabbi to speak.*)

RABBI: He did make one condition, Mary. Grudgingly—but he made it.

MARY (*Hopefully—crosses toward Rabbi—to L. of chair*): You mean—he might change his mind? What is it?

RABBI: It's something you must do.

MARY (*Eagerly*): But I'll do anything! You know I will. Only tell me what it is!

RABBI: You must never receive Jesus here in this house again.

MARY (*Incredulous*): No—

MENDEL: That's what Aaron says—

RABBI: Disown him. Cast him off. Forget that he ever existed.

MARY: Oh—

RABBI: It's a hard choice, Mary. But it's your responsibility. You're the one who must decide.

(*MARY sits on chair. MENDEL does not speak till she is down. Pause.*)

MENDEL: You know this business about Jesus upset Aaron from the very beginning. He always said—"If he's a miracle worker—I'm a Roman Emperor!" I tried to tell him—Judah's a fine young man. Nothing like his brother. (*Crosses to sit L. bench.*) A little hot-tempered perhaps, like all Nazarenes—but marriage will settle him down. I got him partly satisfied—then Jesus came back here with all that to-do about him, and was a failure—That finished Aaron!

RABBI: Well, Mary—?

MARY (*After a pause*): My house will be open to Jesus as long as I live.

RABBI: It seems pretty hard for Judah to pay for his brother's mistakes. You said so yourself, Mary.

MARY (*After a pause*): I can't understand it! Why did they all turn against him? What is he teaching that could possibly do anyone any harm?

RABBI: He excites the people. Puts a lot of new ideas in their heads. Starts them thinking. You see, Mary—it's so easy to get off on the wrong foot. Mind you, I've no objection to his

teaching, even though he isn't a Rabbi. After all, that only means "teacher." I think he's honest and sincere. But very indiscreet. And when people criticize him, see what he says—"Don't judge people if you don't want to be judged yourself."

MENDEL: But then he goes on to make it worse with a deliberate dig at the Pharisees—and you know how touchy they are—calling them names, insulting them. Tells them they're full of hypocrisy and corruption.

RABBI: Word about him has got to Jerusalem and right now, when things are so unsettled, it's a bad time to talk about the equality of man and the oppression of the poor. But that's the history of all reformers. They go too far. I don't want to worry you, Mary, but you mustn't close your eyes and your ears to the danger he's in.

MARY (*Rises—crosses R.*): That's all I have heard since the day he left home to preach! Everyone predicting he'd come to a bad end. And every day more and more people believe in him. (*Up R. C.*) Oh, what I've learned about human nature from this town! All my old friends hardly able to wait until they get inside the gate to tell me some scandalous story about him! No wonder he was a failure here! And you—who invited him—you were always a fair man, but now you've put yourself on the side of the Pharisees who hate Jesus because they see their power and their influence slipping away from them—because word of Jesus and his work is spreading all over the country. That it's even reached Jerusalem. And it'll go on! People like you can't stop him! No one can stop him!

RABBI (*Furious—rises; MENDEL rises*): I came here as a friend—trying to spare your feelings—I didn't come here to be insulted! (*Hat on. To MARY, L. C. of her*): But now, I'll tell you something! If someone doesn't get hold of your son and stop him—he'll end up like his cousin John with his head on a harlot's platter. He's got the Temple and the government so stirred up against him—why, I wouldn't give you that—(*Snaps his fingers*) for his safety! Not that! (*Snaps his fingers again.*)

(*There is a dead silence as the Rabbi breaks off, breathless.*)

(*MARY walks over to the gate and opens it and stands there.*)

MARY (*Almost in a whisper*): I don't like to ask a Rabbi to leave my house—but I can't have you talking like that about my son. The streets are free—you can say what you like in them. But this is his home. (*Her voice breaks a little. Rabbi looks at Mendel—motions him to go. After his exit, Rabbi crosses to L. of MARY. The Rabbi pauses. He is profoundly moved, and we must feel that he realizes her outburst was maternal, and not directed at him personally.*)

RABBI (*Touches MARY lightly*). I'm sorry, Mary. I lost my temper. (*Pause.*) All I know is—if he were my son—I'd be worried. (*He exits after Mendel, leaving MARY shaken by these last words.*)

The Return of Rip Van Winkle**

(Rip Van Winkle has just returned and is pleading to see his daughter who is now the wife of Wouter. People think him crazy. Wouter agrees to let him see Judith if Rip will agree to make no mention of being her father, since everybody believes that Rip Van Winkle died years ago.)

(*The crowd leaves with DOMINIE, with shouts and hurrahs.*)

WOUTER: Now then, old man, do you understand?

RIP: I mustn't say I'm Rip. I mustn't tell her I'm her father.

WOUTER: See that you keep your word.

RIP: Oh, I keep it. She'll know me.

WOUTER (*At the door*): Come in here a minute, my dear.

JUDITH: What is it, Wouter? Is there something I can do for you?

WOUTER: Do you know this old fellow?

National Drama Week

High schools, colleges and universities, community theatres, private drama groups, and individuals interested in the theatre are urged to make appropriate plans for the observance of National Drama Week which will be celebrated this season February 8 through 15, 1942.

A list of suggestions for celebrating this important event will be sent free of charge to all high schools upon request to The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio.

JUDITH (*After looking him over*): Why, no. I never saw him before.

WOUTER: Just talk to him a little, will you? He seems to have gone astray. I can't seem to find out who he is or where he belongs.

JUDITH: How feeble he looks. Sit here, friend, and rest.

RIP: You are big. You are a woman. You smile the same, though. You have a husband. That's what I don't understand. (*Reaches to her and she pulls away.*) Don't go away. I only wanted to touch you a little. I'll just look at you. Are you afraid of me?

JUDITH (*Sorry for him*): Oh, no. See. I'll sit quite close to you. Now will you tell me who you are?

RIP: Oh, yes. (*Looks at Wouter.*) Oh, no—it's better I don't do that. Tell me about yourself. You are happy?

JUDITH: He makes me think of someone, Wouter.

RIP: Yah? Yah?

WOUTER: Does he? Who?

JUDITH: I don't know who it is. But I keep getting the feeling.

RIP: Now your cheeks are red like apples. You have a nice home?

JUDITH: I have the best home and the best husband and the dearest baby boy in the whole world.

RIP: A baby? What's the baby's name?

JUDITH: His name is Rip.

RIP: Rip! Rip! (*To cover his emotion.*) That's a funny name.

JUDITH: I named him for my father.

RIP: You remember him—your father?

JUDITH: I'll never forget him.

RIP: You like it if you see him, yah?

JUDITH: I wish he were here this minute.

RIP: But he isn't, no? No?

JUDITH: No, he's been dead twenty years. He went away into the mountains one night and never came back. We looked for him everywhere.

RIP (*Fighting for self-control*): She doesn't know me! She doesn't know me at all! (*Bracing up.*) All right. I didn't ought to have so fine a girl as her, anyway.

JUDITH (*Struck by the phrase, staring at him, then under her breath*): I know who you want me to think of! My father! (*She looks at him while he waits as if for sentence of life or death. She flings her arms around him.*) You've come back! You've come back . . .

RIP: She knows me! My Judy knows me. Don't cry, Judy.—You smile the same. . . . I've thought of something—(*To Wouter*): Did you ever have a blister on you here? Made by a baked potato?

WOUTER: Judith! It is your father!

JUDITH: You must come home at once and see little Rip.

WOUTER: You can have the finest room in the house and I'll buy you the best gun in New York, and Judith will nurse you till you're strong and well.

RIP (*radiant*): Oh, I'm well now.

WOUTER: Rip! (*Calling outdoors.*) Rychie! Mayken! Come! It's old Rip Van Winkle!! (*All the CHILDREN enter and assume the same positions they had at the beginning of the first act. They laugh together. The picture laughs too, saluting.*)

RIP: There's something funny about this world.

CURTAIN

Winning Programs of the 1940-41 Season

PRINTED PROGRAMS

First Place: *Peter Pan*, Troupe No. 190, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, High School. Directed by Miss Doris E. Marsolais. Though somewhat difficult to read, this is easily the most attractive program entered in the 1940-41 Program Contest. Printed in gold on blue stock, the program contains a statement about James M. Barrie, the names of those on the production staff, and a cleverly written synopsis of the play with the names of the student players in the various roles mentioned, printed in italics. A program that does justice to the play it describes. (We will gladly furnish you with a copy as long as the supply lasts.) (Prize, \$3.00.)

Second Place: *It Can't Happen Here*, Troupe No. 148, San Bernardino, Calif., High School. Directed by Mr. Howard Palmer. This program is the most complete, from the standpoint of information, of those entered in the contest. Printed in the form of a four-page miniature newspaper, the program gives the audience complete details regarding stage sets used in the production, an historical account of the play, problems encountered in directing, a statement concerning Thespian activities in school, and full notes concerning groups aiding in staging the play. (Prize, \$2.00.)

HONORABLE MENTION

(In the order mentioned)

Our Town Troupe No. 368, Geneva, Ohio, High School

Romeo and Juliet Troupe No. 106, Champaign, Ill., Senior High School

My Heart's in the Highlands Troupe No. 190, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, High School

Night of January 16 Troupe No. 374, The Dalles, Oregon, High School

Outward Bound Troupe No. 178, Washington High School, Massillon, Ohio

You Can't Take It With You Troupe No. 231, Alliance, Ohio, High School

Way Out West Troupe No. 74, Middletown, N. Y., High School

Stage Door Troupe No. 112, Norfolk, Nebr., High School

Stage Door Troupe No. 280, Baldwin, N. Y., High School

MIMEOGRAPHED PROGRAMS

First Place: "Annual One-Act Plays", Troupe No. 26, Wahpeton, N. Dak., High School. Directed by Miss Ida Erstad. A cleverly designed program resembling a volume of one-act plays, this program contains a calendar of the Troupe's program for the season, a dedicatory statement, a foreword, names of outstanding Thespians of the past few seasons, names of those appearing in the three one-act plays for the evening, acknowledgments, and names of Thespian officers. (Prize: \$3.00.)

Second Place: *Our Town*, Troupe No. 384, Custer, S. Dak., High School. Directed by Miss Eva Nelson. This program has a drawing of the Stage Manager, with Grovers Corners in the distance, on the cover page. Inside, we find a dedicatory statement, names of the players and their roles, an account of the story as represented in each act, acknowledgments, and some interesting notes about the play on the back cover page. (Prize: \$2.00.)

HONORABLE MENTION

(In the order mentioned)

Young April Troupe No. 384, Custer, S. Dak., High School

Stage Door Troupe No. 421, Leetsdale, Pa., High School

Through the Night Troupe No. 26, Wahpeton, N. Dak., High School

"One-Act Plays" Troupe No. 384, Custer, S. Dak., High School

Don't Take My Penny Troupe No. 331, Masontown, W. Va., High School

Death Takes a Holiday Troupe No. 320, Vidalia, Ga., High School

Our Town Troupe No. 261, Fairmont, Minn., High School

June Mad Troupe No. 112, Norfolk, Nebr., High School

"Banquet Program" Troupe No. 26, Wahpeton, N. Dak., High School

"Banquet Program" Troupe No. 268, Rupert, Idaho, High School

"Banquet Program" Troupe No. 360, Plentywood, Mont., High School

Total number of programs entered in the 1940-41 Program Contest: printed programs, 207; mimeographed programs, 157; total, 364. Number of programs entered in the 1939-40 Contest was 348.

All Troupes are urged to enter their programs in the 1941-42 Program Contest, the results of which will be announced a year from now.

The Technical Director's Page

by ARNOLD S. GILLETTE

Technical Director, University Theatre, State University
of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

Present-Day Trends In Scenic Design

(PART III)



Prof. Gillette

MOSCOW is unlike any other theatrical center one is likely to visit in that it possesses no theatrical district as we know it. In New York, for instance, a fifteen-minute walk from Times Square will put you in touch with the majority of the theatres whose advertisements you've read in the evening papers. But finding your theatre in the capital of the U. S. S. R. is an entirely different matter. With the Red Square as the approximate center of things, we felt lucky if we found our theatre within a radius of two miles. The price of a taxi when you could find one, was prohibitive on the rate of exchange then in force and it wasn't always convenient to wait our turn for one of the unbelievably crowded street cars, so we usually walked. We went

armed with a map of the city and all the heavy warm clothes we could get on and still walk for it was terrifically cold there in January.

On this particular night we were looking for the Siminov Theatre, which we found without too much difficulty and not so far from the Red Square in what appeared to us as a row of buildings that resembled apartment houses. This theatre is both small and intimate, seating perhaps 450 or 500 people. The auditorium floor is raked slightly with the walls of the auditorium pierced to accommodate boxes that are but a few feet above the heads of those spectators seated in the orchestra. The proscenium arch, which is about 25 feet wide, is flanked on each side by small arched doorways that directly face the auditorium and open out onto a good-sized apron that runs from wall to wall of the auditorium.

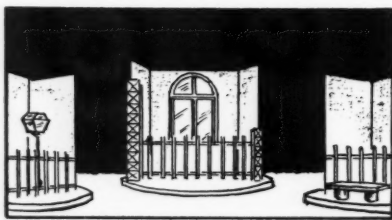
Here is a theatre that might well be compared with many poorly planned high school plants or makeshift summer theatres

as far as the size of the stage and the equipment is concerned. Yet within this theatre there was being produced a play demanding six settings. It was certainly not the number of the settings that made this production noteworthy, for six settings cannot be considered excessive; rather, it was the extremely clever manner in which these sets had been designed and were shifted.

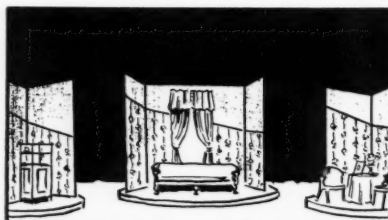
The designer had dug back into the history of staging conventions for the idea he used in solving the scenic problems for a most amusing play called *Talent and Its Admirers*. He had simply taken the principle of the Greeks' *ekkuklema* or revolving stage, modernized it and beautifully adapted it to the requirements of the play and stage. If you'll consult the accompanying sketches you'll see how simple and effective it was. There were three small revolving stages. The larger of these about ten feet in diameter, was upstage center while two smaller revolving units were placed downstage of it with a good third of their width extending offstage out of sight lines. The larger stage was divided in half by a vertical shield, against which the scenery was fastened, this shield being covered on both sides by black plush and reinforced on either end by two smaller, plush-covered frames. The two smaller stages were divided into thirds by similar screens. Since the background against which these plush-covered shields were played was of the same material they were practically indistinguishable, particularly when the small fragmentary flats representing the sets were placed against them.

This scheme permitted the revolving stages to turn simultaneously within full view of the audience. The setting used in Scene 1 was struck during the playing of Scene 2 and so on through the play. The stage crew approached the center stage out of sight of the audience by parting the draperies just upstage of it. Since part of each of the downstage revolving units were offstage there was no problem here of striking or setting up within sight of the audience.

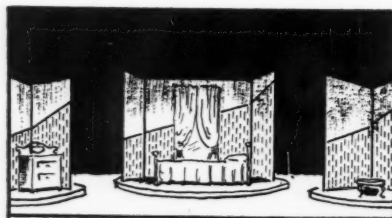
The action of the play did not come to a standstill while these stages turned but was nicely synchronized with the mechanics of shifting. As an example of the degree of cooperation between the director and technician needed to bring these two elements of the production together the shift from the first to the second scene can be used. Scene 1 represents a street, and consists of a lamp-post, a bench, three sections of a picket fence and a window. At the close of the scene there are two gentlemen standing in the street talking to a young lady who is leaning from the window of her home. She invites them into the house and with that as a cue the three stages turn, revealing the living room of her home. With no other movement than the removal of their hats the two men have "stepped" indoors. The dialogue continues as though the curtain had just risen on a regulation scene shift.



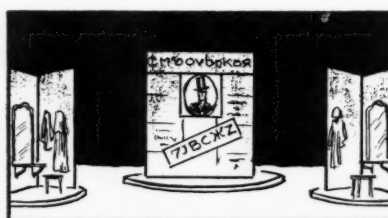
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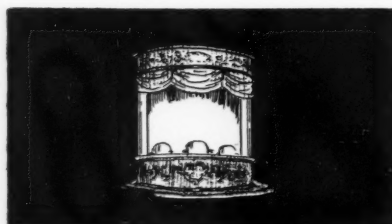
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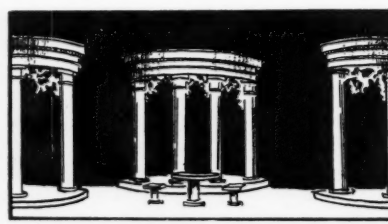
III



IV



V



VI

Not only was this an interesting production from the point of view of shifting and what can be done to overcome limited stage space but the treatment of the design is worthy of your attention. Here is another good example of simplified scenery or impressionism. The third scene, the young lady's bedroom, has been reduced to a bed, stool, window and just enough of the walls to suggest the paper pattern and color. Notice that in this scene, and in the preceding one, the flats used to simulate the walls terminated in a slanting line at the top. This line permitted part of the supporting frames to extend above the flats but since these blended so perfectly with the background the added interest of the slanting line seemed to more than offset this questionable disadvantage.

Scene 4 is a composite setting, representing two separate dressing rooms and a corridor of a theatre. Each dressing room was reduced in detail to a mirror shelf, stool and a few cloths hanging from the wall. The bulletin board and its notices gave an adequate impression of the hall between the two rooms.

Most of us would probably hesitate in undertaking the assignment of designing a setting that is described as "a box in the auditorium of a theatre." But see how perfectly this has been accomplished in Scene V. Nothing but a single box from the auditorium is in evidence and much of the detail of this is lost, for the only source of light was concealed by the hand rail and illuminated only the faces of the actors and the interior. This was by far the most effective design of the production and certainly it was the simplest.

The outdoor garden of the sixth scene was composed of the three sets of formal columns and capitols on which were hung a few climbing roses, while before these were placed the table and chairs.

Rigid Platforms and Wagon Stages

BEFORE discussing the construction of revolving stages such as were used in this production, it might be well to see how rigid platforms can be built and converted into wagon stages, for the revolving stage is but an elaboration of the wagon stage.

The rigid platform has several advantages over the folding platform or "parallel" as it is called. The rigid platform is very simple to build and it's less expensive. It is difficult to carry the height of a parallel by adding leg extensions while the rigid platform is easily altered in this fashion. By removing the legs these units do not require much space for storage. Their greatest advantage over the parallel lies in the fact that they may be converted into wagon stages by bolting rubber-tired swivel casters directly to the platform for a low wagon or to leg extensions if a higher one is needed.

The most common mistake in the planning of these platforms is in making them too large, for this type of platform is heavy. About 60 square feet of platform is the maximum that can be handled

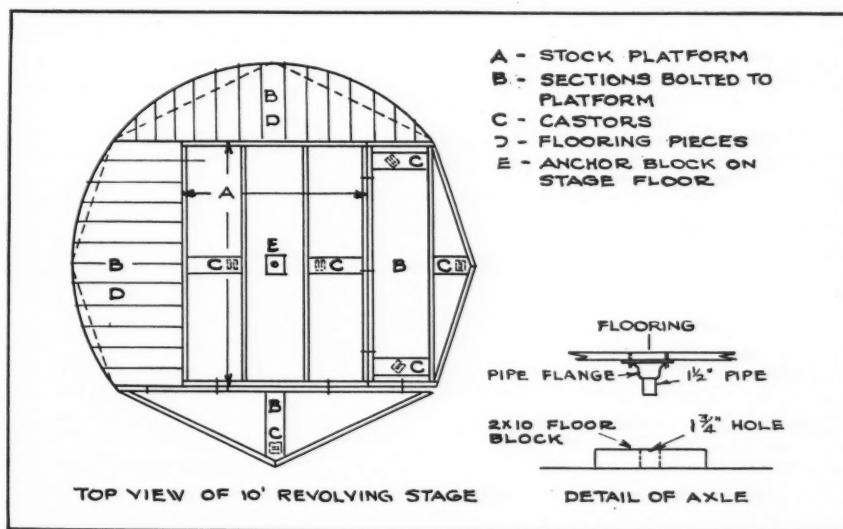
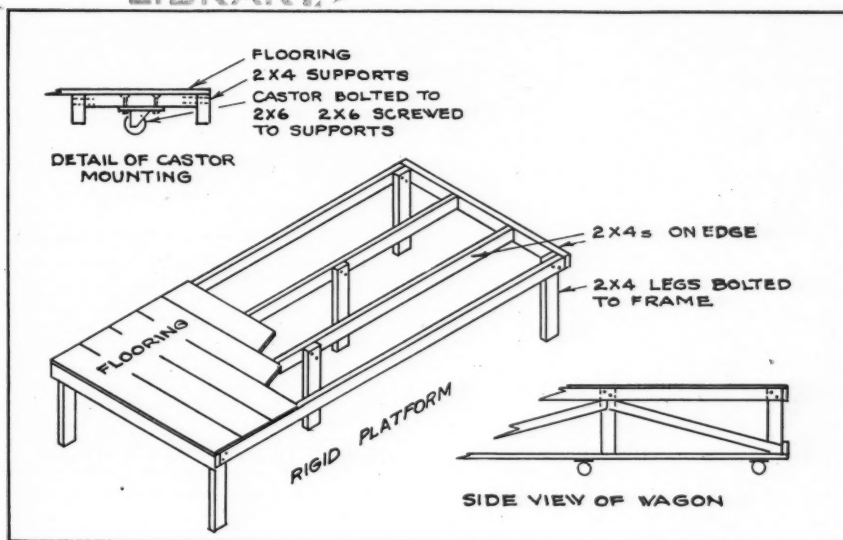
easily. If a larger wagon area is needed it is better to build several smaller platforms and bolt them together.

The materials needed for the construction of these platforms will vary somewhat according to their size, for small platforms, say 3'x6' or 4'x8', the supporting members can be made of 1 1/4"x4" while 2"x4" or even 2"x6" should be used on the larger units. Be sure that the supporting members are not farther apart than 18" or a springy wagon will result. The flooring can be of 1"x8" or 10" white pine shiplap which is preferable to regular 1"x8" or 10" as the lap joint along the length of the boards will give additional strength and eliminate bothersome squeaks.

Revolving Stages

THE revolving stage is but a variation of the rigid platform in construction. It uses the same materials; in fact it may even have one of your rigid platforms as its central section, but it will vary in the manner of assembly. These stages have several basic requirements that must be met to guarantee easy assembly, storage

and proper operation. In the first place unless the revolving stage is to be extremely small, it should be made in sections with each section separated into the supporting frame and flooring piece. The supporting frames with the casters attached are bolted together in their proper position on stage, then the flooring sections placed over them and screwed down. A second requirement is that a revolving stage must have some kind of an axle or hub about which it may turn and which also serves as an anchor to prevent the stage from creeping. This hub may be easily made from standard pipe fittings and a block of 2"x10" fir. The detail drawing of this hub will clarify its method of assembly. The third requirement is that the proper type casters are used and that these are correctly placed on the supporting frames. The ideal caster for this job is a ball-bearing, rubber-tired rigid caster, although a swivel caster may be used by blocking it so that it can no longer pivot. The larger the diameter of the wheel the easier and quieter your stage will turn.



Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays at the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department can be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian Senior Councilor and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

The Imaginary Invalid

As staged by Leitha V. Perkins
Thespian Troupe Sponsor
Washington-Gardner High School
Albion, Michigan

The Imaginary Invalid, by Moliere, arranged and adapted by Kenneth Weston Turner. 8 m, 4 w, or 5 m, 5 w. The Dramatic Publishing Company, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Suitability

DEFT characterizations, situations marked by ageless humor—in fact, the essence of the classic molded to modern standards—are the qualities of *The Imaginary Invalid* as the result of Mr. Turner's splendid work. The play is not only suitable for high school actors but one that many groups should not miss doing, for it acquaints students and audiences with a classic in a manner that will cultivate a respect and liking for something older than 20th century drama.

Students delight in the clever business that abounds in Mr. Turner's adaptation, and the fun of "dressing up" is nowhere better provided than in *The Imaginary Invalid*.

The choice of such a play will appeal to any audience not only for its qualities just mentioned, but as a welcome change from the more usual type of high school play.

Plot

M. Argan, imagining himself suffering from all ailments he has ever heard of, is the unsuspecting victim not only of his doctors and apothecaries but of his own wife until Toinette, the impish but loyal servant, takes matters in her own hands. Argan has even gone so far as to insist that his elder daughter, Angelique, marry

Leitha V. Perkins

THIS introduces Miss Leitha V. Perkins to the readers of this page. I am sure that everyone who has read her discussion will want to stage "The Imaginary Invalid." I know that I do and I am considering it for future production.

Miss Perkins is teaching her fifth year in the Washington-Gardner High School in Albion, Michigan. She organized, in the summer of 1940, a summer playhouse with high school people and supervised the staging of twelve one-act plays. She and her Thespian Troupe No. 53 were the first hosts to a one-act play festival held for two years in Albion and she tells me her Troupe expects to be hosts again this coming spring.

Miss Perkins holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Albion College and is working on her Master's degree from the same school. She has studied at the University of Michigan.

Thomas, a stolid young doctor, instead of her lover, Cleante, so that a physician may be in the family. Toinette, in the guise of a physician, causes Argan to entertain his first misgivings as to doctors. Her next scheme proves the love of Argan's wife, Beline, a pretense only and that of Angelique, whom he has considered disobedient, to be sincere. Argan as a result asserts himself as the head of the house once more and restores Angelique's happiness.

Casting

The casting problem of *The Imaginary Invalid* is neither unique nor unsurmountable. It is necessary to have a strong actor capable of managing each of the rather heavy roles of Argan and Toinette. In fact, this is so necessary that it should be understood that this play is not one of those that can be hailed as the

answer to the needs of every group.

Argan must be played by a boy capable of nuances from tyrannical egotism, to pitiful gullibility, to a horror of pain and death.

Toinette is not merely impish. She is shrewd and as tyrannical as Argan. Her personality must be stronger than his in their constant and amusing clashes which so subtly suggest her ultimate success and Argan's real dependence on her.

The other supporting roles are interesting but offer no special difficulties that a careful study of the play will not solve. The "Notes on Characters" in the Turner edition will prove very helpful. Perhaps the role of Louison, the younger of Argan's daughters, should be emphasized, as it is a delightful bit part that can be made so fully only by a selection of a small, sprightly girl whose physical appearance is that of a twelve-year-old. I feel we were very fortunate in our Louison after seeing the part played by a larger older-looking girl.

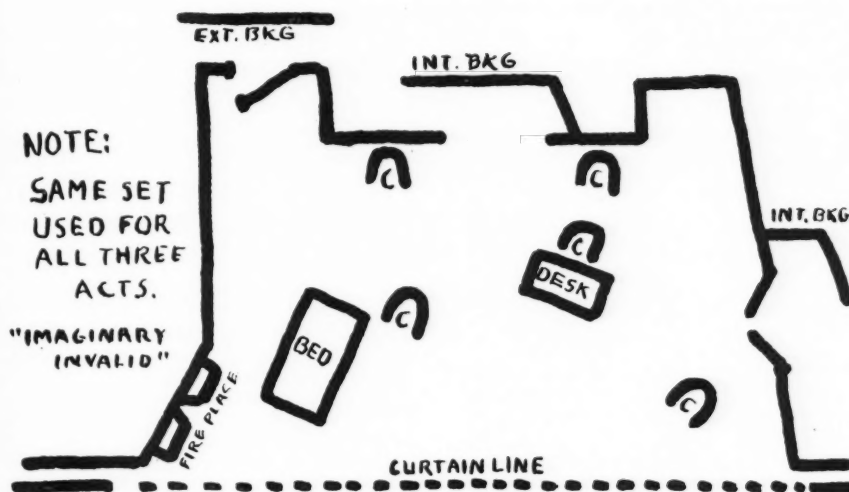
Directing

It seems to me that Mr. Turner's very fine notes found in the Director's Manual included in the play book should be a great help in answering any directing problems that the play offers. Of particular note are the sections "A Temporal Analysis of the Characters of This Play" and "An Analysis of the Scenes." The "Notes on Organization" and "Notes on Acting Technique" should be particularly helpful to the more inexperienced director, for they are applicable to all directing.

A suggestion as to the one main problem of directing this play is to be found in this statement from Mr. Turner's foreword: "It has been the aim of the editor to keep alive the rollicking spirit of Moliere's original productions." Then it surely follows that that will be the director's aim and the accomplishment of it will be his biggest problem. For this reason, attention should be paid to the division of the play into acting "scenes" as provided by Mr. Turner's notes, and the analysis of those scenes from the stand-



Scene from Act III of *The Imaginary Invalid* as staged by Thespian Troupe No. 53 at the Washington-Gardner High School, Albion, Mich. Directed by Miss Leitha V. Perkins. Stage set designed by Troupe President J. Bruce Gusselman.



points of tempo, atmosphere, and dominant character.

All through the play Argan's speech and actions must change abruptly from slow to quick; or otherwise some of the cleverest situations resulting from those changes are not fully realized. Toinette's tempo is quick throughout except for the Scene 3 of Act III, in which she disguises herself as a doctor. Slowness and great deliberation must mark this scene and the director must be on the alert to see that the energetic, "rough-and-tumble" actions of Toinette in previous scenes do not show through here. The tempos of the other characters' actions and speeches are also of paramount importance as they provide the

backing, contrast, or relief for the various scenes and their climaxes.

A good example of the constant change of tempo is found in the opening scene of Act I, with its slow tempo at first, building to medium, then quick as Argan, very angry, chases Toinette, and finally subsiding to slow or medium slow as Argan is seated again. The atmosphere here is one of farce comedy.

In Act II, Scene 2 must be done carefully to bring the tempo down to slow to point up the mock seriousness of the physicians. While Thomas and Diafoirus dominate the scene, Cleante and Angelique are very important to help "build" it. At the close of Act II, the scene between

COSTUME CHART FOR *THE IMAGINARY INVALID* as staged by Leitha V. Perkins Albion, Michigan, Troupe 53

CHARACTER	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III
M. Argan	Blue breeches; buff waistcoat; gray neckcloth; white nightcap; floor length dull red robe; black stockings and slippers.	Same.	Same, except for the removal of the slippers and the replacing of the red robe with one of the doctor's black ones.
Toinette	Black blouse with very full sleeves, white cuffs and collar; extremely full black skirt.	Same.	Same with the addition of the doctor's black robe and high black hat.
Angelique	Tight bodiced waist and panniers of flowered material; drooping, low neckline, lace trimmed; puffed sleeves with lace underskirt of golden yellow.	Same.	Same.
Beline	Similar to Angelique's except that the color was lavender.	Same.	Same.
Cleante		Cream brocade undertunic with lace sleeves; dark purple velvet waistcoat and breeches; white cravat; white stockings and black shoes.	Same.
Louison		Same style of dress as worn by the other women; color, pastel green.	
Beralde			Riding costume of white undertunic with long sleeves with wide lace flounces at wrist; sleeveless overcoat of rich tan suede; matching breeches; large tan hat with black plums; brown stockings and shoes.
Fleurant (I, III)* Diafoirus (II)* .. Thomas (II)* .. Purgon (III)* ..	*NOTE: only two full costumes were provided for these four characters and the only time both are needed at the same time is in Act II. Black choir robes were used over dark breeches, black stockings and black shoes. Hats with foot-high crowns that tapered to the top, and brims three or four inches wide were used.		
Bonnefoi	Black robe, floor length, black hat, stockings and shoes.		

Argan and Louison is a delightful bit if built from quick to medium slow and back to quick as Louison's exit brings the close of the Act.

In addition to the fake doctor scene of Act III already mentioned, Scenes 4 and 5 in this Act are to be skillfully handled as the ensemble carries it.

Rehearsals

Our rehearsals for the play were held either after school from 4:15 p. m. on or from 7:00 to 9:30 p. m. Two Saturday morning rehearsals were held.

Jan. 13-17—Act I —2 hour daily rehearsals.
Jan. 20-25—Act II —Same as for Act I.
Jan. 27-Feb. 1—Act III—Same as Act II.
Feb. 3-8—Scenes from whole requiring special work.

Criticism given for each scene.

All hand props used.

Feb. 10 —Entire play. Hand props, costumes, skeleton set.

Feb. 11 —Entire play.

Feb. 12 —Dress rehearsal.

Feb. 13 —Dress rehearsal.

Feb. 14 —Performance.

Stage Problems

Our stage set was designed and executed by our Troupe president. As the accompanying sketch shows, he made an adaptation of the stage chart in the play book, eliminating the casement window UR and the door ULC. We preferred to use flats but curtains (drapes) could also be used very effectively. The property plot as provided in the play book is very complete.

The candle-lighting scene for Toinette at the opening of Act III may provide some difficulty for a school where the use of lighted candles on the stage is forbidden as it is in our school. The scene is so effective, however, as make any trouble to work it out worthwhile. We were able to secure an old wrought-iron chandelier which we fixed to hold candle-shape bulbs. When Toinette lowered it for lighting the bulbs were loose in the sockets and she camouflaged the "lighting" of each candle from an electric "candle-lighter" beautifully. Many remarks were made about the effectiveness of the scene.

Costumes and Make-Up

As we announced in the production notes on our programs, we did not attempt to costume the play entirely authentically. For anyone wishing to do that the play book has a very complete costume plot for specific costuming as well as one for general costuming suggestions. We rented three complete costumes, Argan's Beralde's, and Cleante's, which were colorful and fairly authentic. Beline, Angelique and Louison wore dresses made with tight-waisted bodices and panniers of flowered material and underskirts of plain contrasting colors. These were fairly typical of the later part of the 17th century, with very low necklines, lace-trimmed puffed sleeves and without hoops. Toinette wore a full-skirted black dress with white collar and cuffs in order to use the doctor's robe in Act III more easily. The doctors and apothecaries wore black choir robes and

hats about a foot high that tapered to the top and had narrow brims.

There are no difficult make-up problems. Argan, of course, must have old-age make-up, but I prefer that he should not be made to look too emaciated or really ill. After all, his condition was only in his state of mind; and while that would affect his health and appearance, this fact would not justify creating the appearance of a man about to die.

Budget

Since the play has no royalty, we were able to produce it very inexpensively at a cost of about twenty-five dollars.

Publicity

The Imaginary Invalid was given as our offering to National Drama Week during that week; so we made use of that theme in publicizing it. Our most truly "different" scheme was the making of a miniature newspaper, *Grease-Paint News*, printed in our school print shop. It carried an article on the play, the director the National Thespian Society, the cast, production staff, past Thespian plays, National Drama Week, the work being done on the revision of old plays, and a gossip bit "Behind the Scenes." These miniature newspapers were distributed through homerooms to all students and created so much interest that the juniors asked permission to use the idea; so Vol. 1, No. 2 came out for the junior play.

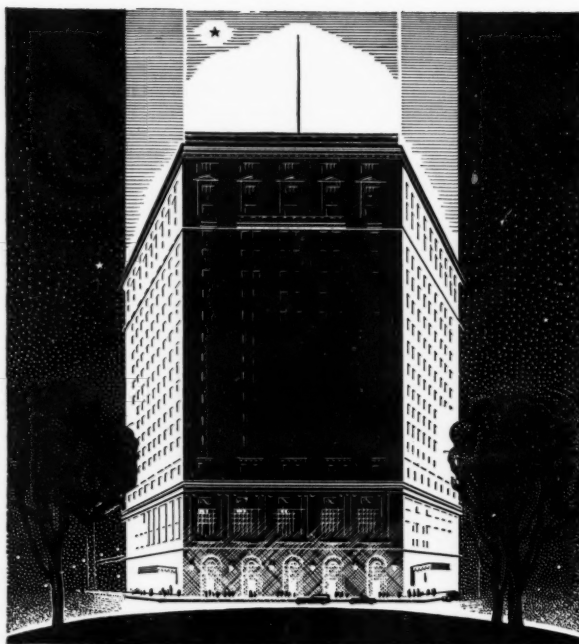
Local clubs meeting any day of the week of the performance announced the play for us. The customary posters were made by art department students and large placards were printed by our printing department for distribution in merchants' windows. Two days before the performance we presented skits from the play before a joint assembly.

Results

Measured by any one of the many outgrowths to be desired as the result of five weeks of intensive work on a play, our performance was a success. It offered an opportunity for, and we got, splendid co-operation from various departments of the school and the community. However, most important of all were the initiative, ingenuity, and talents developed and exhibited by our Thespians. We not only felt we had spent an enjoyable five weeks but came from the experience with imperishable memories and values.

This statement by the representatives of the *Albion Evening Recorder* who attended the performance seemed to reflect the reaction of the audience. It appeared in the February 15, 1941, issue in an article, "Hit Scored by High School Thespians": "In presenting Moliere's three-act comedy-drama, *The Imaginary Invalid* in Washington-Gardner High School auditorium Friday evening, Troupe 53 of the National Thespian Society staged one of the best productions offered by an Albion high school dramatics group in many a day."

Watch for the staging of that favorite melodrama, *Kind Lady*, in the February issue.



Overlooking Grand Circus Park, in the midst of the colorful theatre district, and just around the corner from the shopping center, the Detroit Hotel Statler will be the headquarters for the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the National Association of Teachers of Speech.

Annual Speech and Drama Conventions Will Be Held In Detroit

December 29, 30, 31, 1941

THE twenty-sixth annual convention of the National Association of Teachers of Speech, meeting with the American Educational Theatre Association and the American Speech Correction Association, will be held at the Hotel Statler, Detroit, Michigan, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, December 29, 30, 31.

Preliminary convention programs promise much in the way of practical aids for the teaching of speech and dramatics in all their phases. Unusual attractions at this year's convention of the National Association of Teachers of Speech will be a demonstration of the Voder and the appearance of several nationally known personages. Particular emphasis will be given to speech at the secondary school level. The American Educational Theatre Association is planning an outstanding program of speakers, conferences, and demonstrations for dramatics teachers and directors, with considerable emphasis on dramatics at the high school level. To those interested in speech correction, the program of the American Speech Correction Association will offer much in the way of discussions and demonstrations.

Along with the rich educational programs planned for the three conventions will be many attractions for amusement and relaxation. The City of Detroit, at present center of National Defense Production and just across the river from a nation at war, will offer a variety of attractions for those interested in sightseeing. Delegates, as well as their families and friends, will be enthusiastic about the tours to Greenfield Village and the Ford Museum, the Ford Factory, the Chrysler Tank Plant, south through the Tunnel into Canada and back across the Ambassador Bridge, world-famous Cranbrook School, scenic Grosse Pointe and Belle Isle. Those who have secured tickets in advance will be admitted to the broadcast of the Ford Sunday Evening Hour on December 28.

Hotel reservations should be made at once. Rates at the Hotel Statler are \$3.00 to \$6.50 for a single room; \$4.50 to \$8.00 for double room with double bed. Those who plan to travel by train should consult their local passenger agents for special round-trip holiday railroad rates. Those wishing further particulars regarding hotel accommodations, as well as advance copies of the program for the three conventions, should write Prof. R. L. Cortright, Executive Secretary, The National Association of Teachers of Speech, Wayne University, Detroit, Mich.

National Thespian Luncheon

THESPIAN Sponsors and students attending the national speech and drama conventions in Detroit, December 29, 30, 31, are urged to call at the Thespian Registration Desk in the Hotel Statler. Regional Directors and members of the National Council will be on hand to receive them.

A Thespian Luncheon, tentatively scheduled for 12:15 P.M., Monday, December 29, will give visiting Sponsors and students additional opportunities to become better acquainted. Further announcements regarding this luncheon will be made in the December Thespian Newsletter, as well as in the official convention programs.

With the Radio Editor

A page published for teachers and students interested in radio activities at the high school level. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed.

Edited by G. HARRY WRIGHT

Department of Speech, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

Radio Listening At Its Best

I'LL have to go away back for the text for this month's sermon—back about ten years, in fact, to the time when *Collier's Hour*, featuring the pithy remarks of John B. Kennedy, was one of the most popular Sunday evening radio programs. One Sunday afternoon one of my friends, a fellow-teacher, called me up on the telephone.

"Busy tonight?"

"No," I answered.

"Come on over to the house and let's talk."

"Righto!"

"Just one thing. Between the hours of eight and nine, we don't talk. We listen. *Collier's Hour* is on the radio at that time, and I never miss it. And I don't want it spoiled by conversation. If you feel that you have to talk during the program, don't come."

I didn't take offense, because my friend and I knew each other well enough to be absolutely frank and straightforward. I went over. At eight o'clock he snapped on the radio, took out pencil and scratch pad, lit a pipe, and settled himself in an easy chair to listen. I did the same. For one hour we listened, and neither of us spoke a single word. The only sound, other than that coming from the loud speaker, was the occasional scratch of a pencil on paper. At the end of the hour he snapped off the radio, and we talked about the program—discussed it far into the night.

That was radio listening at its best. We purposefully dedicated ourselves to an hour of intensive listening—doing absolutely nothing else, taking notes on what especially interested or antagonized us and on bits of the program that we wanted to talk about later. We heard the *whole* program, and we absorbed it without the distracting intrusion of talk, knitting, chess, or bridge. Then, with the loud speaker silenced, we hashed it over—took it apart, and argued about what it contained.

It was fun, and a real experience. That is the only way to listen to a radio program.

There is entirely too much half-way, or even quarter-way listening to radio these days—listening (if it can be called listening at all) in which the sounds coming from the loud-speaker knock feebly at the outer portals of our consciousness, while our real attention is entertaining a dozen and one other things. This is not altogether our own fault. The very conditions of radio reception make it very difficult for us to give our undivided attention to any program. We hear the program in

our homes, where there are usually several persons going about their various concerns, and where only one person may be interested in the program of the moment. Naturally, the other members of the family want to talk, or play cards, or run the vacuum sweeper, or argue about last Saturday's football game. If the listener is not a person of unusually strong character possessing almost superhuman powers of concentration, he is likely to find himself joining in the activities of the others, and thinking of everything else besides the program which he started out to hear.

If we want to get the most out of our listening then, we should dedicate our listening period to that and nothing else, eliminating all distractions such as conversation, reading, work, etc. Last winter the folks at our house (there are four college boys with us) listened for relaxation to the *Hermit's Cave* horror story program on Sunday night. When it was time for the program to start, we would gather in the living room and turn out all of the lights, and during the program we would not speak. In this way we were able to extract all of the excitement the program had to offer, and we often went to bed with a definite case of "creeps".

Now I'll admit that some radio programs are not worth listening to intently, and some form a pleasant and harmless background for more important activities. A faint background of boogie-woogie does no harm when one is attacking an over-

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size stack of dirty dishes, for example. But radio has so much to offer in some of its programs that one should listen with a definite, predetermined purpose.

Would a few thumb-rules help?

1. Don't depend upon random listening. You miss too many good programs. Consult your program schedules, and make a definite date with yourself to listen to a program that you really want to hear. Incidentally, you or your radio teacher ought to be on the mailing lists of the networks for complete schedules. The National Broadcasting puts out a monthly bulletin called *This Is the National Broadcasting Company* which contains, on the inside fold, a complete schedule of programs. You may have it for the asking, and it is of convenient size for posting on your Speech bulletin board. Columbia has similar publications.

2. Know what you are going to look for (or listen for) in each program.

3. Never listen to a program alone if you can avoid it. Gather a few friends at your home. You will want to talk with them about the program later.

4. Eliminate all distractions. Don't talk, play cards, read, or do anything else at all while the program is on.

5. Take the program apart after it is over. Find out how your friends react to it. If there is some program that interests you more than any other, suggest to one of your teachers that the class be given an assignment to listen to it, and then to discuss it in class the next day.

I hope that this doesn't all sound as if I'm trying to take the fun out of radio listening. If you'll try some of the suggestions above, I assure you that you'll have more fun than ever, and that you'll discover a lot of things about radio programs that you didn't know before.

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SKYLARK

A Paramount Picture

CONSISTENT magazine readers stand a good chance of knowing the plots in advance to about one-third of all pictures turned out of Hollywood each year. The magazine field is one of the story mines for movies. Facts show that more films are made from tales which ran originally in magazines than from either stage hits or best-selling novels. It all boils down to the statement that a writer who can please millions of weekly customers and the editor who keeps up his circulation, ought to know something about public tastes in fiction.

Of course, many of the serials appearing in magazines turn up in novel form. At rare intervals they become stage plays, radio playlets or screen dramas. The plot of *Skylark* is probably the only one which has reached all five of these major forms of public amusement. In the beginning Samson Raphaelson wrote the story as a magazine serial, *The Streamlined Heart*, for publication in the Saturday Evening Post of January and February, 1939. Later he dramatized it as a starring vehicle for Gertrude Lawrence. The three-act play version then opened at the Morosco Theater in New York City on October 12, 1939. After several months on Broadway, it toured the following season. Next, the story became a chapterized novel, then a radio playlet, and, finally, a film starring Claudette Colbert.

During a vacation period between films, Miss Colbert saw the New York production. "I enjoyed it immensely," she explains. "At the time, Paramount hadn't purchased the screen rights. Later, however, when I returned to Hollywood, the studio informed me that it had bought the play for me. Because I had not been looking for hints on her character from Miss Lawrence, I had no impressions of how she had done her role. I remembered only her delightful personality. So, when the production played Los Angeles, I refused to see it. I knew that, realizing I would do the same part on the screen, I would be unconsciously watching for guiding points of characterization and personal business to duplicate in the film. That would have been unfortunate, since Miss Lawrence and I are not the same type of actresses."

The star seems to attract hit plays to herself as screen material, *Skylark* being her fifteenth movie made from a stage play. In the early days of her career, while still working in New York, Miss

Colbert appeared in four stage-to-screen vehicles. *The Hole in the Wall*, *The Lady Lies*, *The Big Pond*, and *The Smiling Lieutenant*, adapted from the operetta, *Waltz Dream*. Upon her arrival in Hollywood, among her remaining thirty-four starring films, nine were originally stage plays, *Manslaughter*, *The Sign of the Cross*, *Tovarich*, *Tonight Is Ours*, *Three-Cornered Moon*, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, *Zaza*, *The Wiser Sex*, and *The Misleading Lady*. Currently she is being photographed in another stage drama, *Remember the Day*, under the auspices of 20th Century-Fox. Following this picture she is slated to appear in Paramount's *Lady in the Dark* by Moss Hart, the screen rights of which were purchased for \$285,000, the highest sum ever paid for a stage play.

In *Skylark*, Claudette Colbert continues to prove her versatility and courage in

interpreting unexpected roles. She started in films as a straight leading woman. Then she ventured into frivolous comedy in *It Happened One Night*, sang in *The Torch Singer*, danced in *Zaza*, died tragically in *Cleopatra*, played the mother of a grown daughter in *Imitation of Life*, and now becomes the first current glamour star to perform out-and-out, low-brow, pantomimic slapstick.

Skylark is Miss Colbert's third film with Ray Milland who can paint a contrasting picture of a morning six years ago when he reported for his opening day's work on *The Gilded Lily*. It was his first leading role in a feature film, a chance to play opposite a recognized star and, for him, a young actor who hadn't succeeded in winning any attention at all, a "do-or-die" situation.

"I was drousy, because I hadn't slept much all night," he says today. "I had gotten up at 3 a. m. and had paced the floor in a nervous frenzy. I hadn't been able to eat a bite of breakfast. And there I was on the set, shaking like a leaf when I saw Director Wesley Ruggles and scared to death to look at Miss Colbert for fear she would see how jittery I was. Finally, I noticed that the property boy had made some coffee in a corner of the stage. I went over and got a cup. I spilled a lot of it on my suit and then my nervousness came popping up at me." How he got through that first day has always been a mystery to Mr. Milland. He did, however, and his role won him a Paramount contract. Last year, he was teamed again with Miss Colbert in *Arise My Love*. In *Skylark*, they are married as the picture opens. The first scene shows them glancing at photographs of themselves taken five years previously. Actually these photographs were "stills" of the two stars taken during the filming of *The Gilded Lily*.

Brian Aherne is co-starred with Miss Colbert and Mr. Milland. It marks his return to Paramount where he made his screen debut in 1933 opposite Marlene Dietrich in *The Song of Songs*. In *Skylark* he sings for the first time on the screen, warbling the old sea chantey, "Blow the Man Down."

Skylark is a new departure for the producer-director, Mark Sandrich. After directing a long series of Astaire-Rogers dancing films he stepped into three consecutive Jack Benny musical comedies. *Skylark* is his first comedy without music in a number of years.

Mr. Sandrich asserts that sincerity puts over any film, whether an epic or a modest little picture. In proof he points to the care taken in *Skylark* to avoid hokum scenes.

"Actors used to have 'tricks,' directors had pet devices for jerking a tear or causing a chuckle and writers always knew what stunts to fall back upon when they needed a sure-fire effect in a story," he says. "That was hokum. Under keen analysis, it was something 'phoney.' Actors

Stage to Screen

Now Before the Cameras

Arsenic and Old Lace (WB) by Joseph Kesselring, with Frank Capra directing Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre.

I Married An Angel (MGM) modern Rodgers and Hart musical comedy, directed by Roy del Ruth, starring Neilson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald.

Male Animal (WB) by Elliott Nugent and James Thurber, directed by Mr. Nugent with Olivia deHavilland, Henry Fonda, Joan Leslie.

Man Who Came To Dinner (WB) by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, with William Keighley directing Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Billie Burke, Jimmy Durante, and Monty Woolley in his original stage role of Sheridan Whiteside.

Mr. and Mrs. North (MGM) by Owen Davis, starring Gracie Allen.

Panama Hattie (MGM) directed by Norman McLeod with Ann Sothorn.

Remember The Day (20th CF) by Philo Higley and Philip Dunning, directed by Henry King with Claudette Colbert, John Payne.

Roxie Hart (20th CF) from play *Chicago* by Maurine Watkins. William Wellman directing Ginger Rogers, Adolphe Menjou, George Montgomery, Spring Byington.

Shanghai Gesture (UA) by John Colton, directed by Joseph Von Sternberg with Gene Tierney, Victor Mature, Walter Huston, Ona Munson, Maria Ouspenskaya, Albert Basserman.

Twin Beds (UA) by Margaret Mayo and Salisbury Fields with Tim Whelan directing George Brent, Joan Bennett, Mischa Auer, Ernest Truex, Glenda Farrell.

We Were Dancing (MGM) from one-act play by Noel Coward in his series, "Tonight at 8:30", directed by Robert Z. Leonard with Norma Shearer, Melvyn Douglas, Lee Bowman, Marjorie Main.

invariably showed pensiveness or deep study by pulling an ear lobe, heroines thrust the back of a hand over the mouth in screaming, directors would have an old lady take out a baby shoe and stroke it to draw audience tears and . . . but why go on. The world knows them. Unfortunately, we sometimes see them in pictures even today.

"But in *Skylark*, we play everything straight," Mr. Sandrich continues. "Here is one example. Originally the character played by Brian Aherne was a heavy drinker who wobbled around and delivered bright, merry quips. We wanted Miss Colbert to eventually fall in love with him so that it would be a question of which man to choose, Mr. Milland or Mr. Aherne. It would have been completely 'phony' for a woman like Claudette to entertain the idea of being married to a 'toss-pot,' no matter how personable. So we made him just a ladies' man who said smart things because he didn't care what people thought of him."

Sandrich also points out that in the most hilarious slap-stick scene in the picture, the one in which Miss Colbert is bounced all over the cabin of a tiny sailing boat, spills coffee, wallows on the floor, and gets seasick, she plays everything with real seriousness.

"Basically these scenes are a throw-back to films of a quarter century ago," he explains, "to the days when screen actors hit one another with custard pies, comedienesses shoved each other into mud puddles and Keystone Kops wound up every story with a frantic hilarious chase. Today, the world considers these as the crude days when movies were in their infancy, yet in the year 1941 custard pies still get laughs, the fall-in-the-water gag is still the screen's sure-fire laugh-getter, the chase continues to be useful, and slapstick is as vital in this day and age as it was in 1921 or even 1911. The only difference is that you must give a reason for its happening. It is ever better when it also arrives at something vital to the story point. We hear a lot of talk about comedy being on a higher plane, more subtle and refined, but the facts are that it is still basically the comedy which had its start away back in the days of court jesters and Punch-and-Judy shows and came to America with burlesque troupes.

"In the era when court jesters had to get laughs or lose their heads, they had one sure laugh-getter to rely upon. That was the fall. It never failed. So, in 1941, Bette Davis, does a sit-down and Claudette Colbert rolls all over the inside of a boat for *Skylark* in a manner that would have made Mabel Normand or Louise Fazenda green with envy in their heydays.

"Yet she doesn't mug," Director Sandrich continues. "Every move is that of a woman who isn't conscious that she is a bit ludicrous. She tries desperately to carry out a mission. In other words, the



Claudette Colbert, Brian Aherne and Ray Milland in a comedy scene from *Skylark*.

Skylark

Produced and directed by Mark Sandrich.
Screenplay by Allan Scott as based upon the
play and novel by Samson Raphaelson
and produced by John Golden.
Photographed by Charles Lang, A. S. C.

Lydia Kenyon.....	Claudette Colbert
Tony Kenyon.....	Ray Milland
Jim Blake.....	Brian Aherne
Myrtle Vantine.....	Binnie Barnes
George Gorell.....	Walter Abel
Frederick Vantine.....	Grant Mitchell
Charlotte Gorell.....	Mona Barrie
Ned Franklin.....	James Rennie
Theodore.....	Ernest Cossart

character is sincere and is twice as funny that way."

Lavishness, he points out, means nothing if characters are not written and portrayed with life-like realism. "Nothing out of character or inserted merely for effect, should ever be done in pictures," he concludes.

Mid-way in the filming of *Skylark* the cast and crew had to wait four days to photograph the rain scene. During this time Southern California was drenched with real rain but you can't shoot rain scenes in real rain. It sounds strange, but it's true. Real rain won't photograph. For the camera, the down-falling streams must be heavier than anything short of a cloud-burst. And, of course, real rain would ruin the camera.

After the dreary wait, the sun shines. The camera is set up on a track parallel to a side-walk, supposedly in the metropolitan district of New York City. Miss

Colbert stands in the doorway of a building, Mr. Milland a short distance out of camera range. Director Sandrich gives the signal to turn on the rain. The camera begins to whirl inwardly. The scene starts.

Out into the rain steps Claudette, attractive in a svelte rain coat. She jumps back into a doorway, fumbles to open her umbrella. In steps Milland, quickly. He plays her husband whom she is about to divorce.

Ray says, "Here, give it to me." He takes the umbrella, opens it, holds it above her, and begins guiding her along the street. Pedestrians, carrying umbrellas, bustle along in both directions.

"Let go of my arm," begs Claudette.

"Not before I get you home."

They begin to argue until they reach another doorway, the entrance to a subway station. Claudette darts in, Ray in hot pursuit.

Director Sandrich calls, "Cut! That's fine. Now we'll move inside. Turn off the rain."

Workmen rush in, lift the camera bodily and carry it through the door to a reproduction of the interior of the subway. Here the scene will continue with the camera shooting out into the rainy street.

The director calls the players together and prepares to rehearse their scene while the camera is being lined up and workmen outside clear the view of movie apparatus.

Suddenly, the director does a double-take through the window. He shouts, "Turn off the rain! Don't waste it while we're rehearsing. Wait until we're ready to shoot."

The property man shrugs his shoulders, "We can't turn off that rain, Mr. Sandrich. It's real rain this time."

Change of Address

Change of address should be reported to us at once. Please give the old address, as well as the new. The expiration date for your subscription appears on the magazine wrapper.

On the High School Stage

News about interesting and important events in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Shenandoah, Iowa

The 1941-42 season of major dramatic productions at the Shenandoah High School (Thespian Troupe No. 133) opened on October 17 with the Junior Class play, *Stop Thief*, staged under the direction of Miss May Virden, director of dramatics and Thespian Troupe Sponsor. Patty Ann Crouch was assistant director. Two one-act plays, *The Early Worm* and *Treasure Hunt*, were given in chapel on November 7 and will be repeated on December 4 as part of an evening of one-act plays for public performance. Miss Virgen recommends *Treasure Hunt* as an excellent play for an all-girl cast.

Kingsport, Tenn.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 432 at the Dobyne-Bennett High School opened their season with a performance of the one-act play, *The Crumbs that Fall*, with the proceeds going to the British War Relief Fund. The play was given on October 21 with an all-male cast under the direction of Miss Nancy C. Wylie, Thespian Troupe Sponsor. The first full-length play of the season, *Poor, Dear Edgar*, was given in mid-November by the Senior Class, with Mr. P. A. Counce directing.

Benton Harbor, Mich.

Speaking of the recently adopted Thespian Point System, Miss Mary E. Furr, Sponsor for the Thespian Troupe at the Benton Harbor High School, writes: "I am adopting the Point System as given in the National Constitution. The students like it. It gives them something on which to build. It makes it possible for a larger group to fulfill the requirements of membership and best of all, it serves as an incentive and goal toward which those who are already Thespians may work." Several new members were added to the Benton Harbor Troupe at a special initiation ceremony held before the entire student body on November 4.

Cincinnati, Ohio

The popular comedy, *Old Doc*, will be the first major play of the season for the Sages of Hughes High School (Thespian Troupe No.

460). The play will be given early in December under the direction of Miss Erna Kruckemeyer, dramatics director and Thespian Sponsor at this school.

Milwaukee, Wis.

The first major production of the year, *Kind Lady*, at the Rufus King High School was given on November 27, 28, under the direction of Elias N. Lane, director of dramatics. Other full-length plays for the present season are now being considered.

Searcy, Ark.

Members of Thespian Troupe No. 340 at the Searcy High School held their first meeting on October 12, with Thespian Sponsor Marguerite Pearce presiding. Officers for the year are George Forrester, president; Rufus Darwin, vice-president; Laura Jean Hilger, secretary;

Thespians Win National Contest

THAT Thespians do enjoy superiority in all phases of dramatic activities is again attested by the results of the 1941 National Play-Picture Contest sponsored by the Row, Peterson & Company, of Evanston, Ill. First place honors, with a cash prize of \$25.00, went to Thespian Troupe No. 177 at the Orlando, Florida, Senior High School, with Miss Mildred E. Murphy, as Sponsor. The winning picture was from a scene from the play, *Foot-Loose*.

Second prize was awarded to a picture from the play, *Mollie O'Shaughnessey*, entered by Thespian Troupe No. 207 at the Mount Vernon, Washington, High School, with Miss Mary K. Rohrer as Sponsor. A cash prize of \$15.00 was given to the Mount Vernon Thespians.

Honorable mention was given to pictures submitted by members of Thespian Troupe No. 116 at the Mount Vernon, Indiana, High School and Thespian Troupe No. 455 at Benton Harbor, Michigan.

The Thespian Banquet

By AVERIL TURNER

(Read before members of Thespian Troupe No. 43 at the Hundred, West Virginia, High School, on the occasion of their annual Banquet, May 15, 1941.)

We meet again in banquet hall
Where Thespian colors, gold and blue,
Have honored place;
And candles tall
Glow softly, lightly blending all
In patterned lace.

Fragrance of blossoms fill the air.
Soft shimmering gowns of every hue
Lend gay romance;
Where heroine fair
Meets hero tall, forgetting care
In one bright glance.

Too soon, this banquet hour is o'er
For then—prospective Thespian
Will have to hazard one test more
The goal to win;
And ne'er before
Have stood so many at the door
To enter in.

The evening too, will soon be o'er.
The flowers will fade, the guests depart;
The voices cease, the lights burn lower;
Yet in the heart—
Will live the memory of an hour
When Thespian Troupe increased its power
Advancing Art.

Theda Freeman, treasurer; Louise Pollett, historian; and Mary Joe Henry, reporter. Considerable time is being spent this fall on the selection of plays for the season. The first Thespian initiation and banquet will be held early in December.—Mary Joe Henry, Reporter.

Morgantown, W. Va.

The twelfth annual West Virginia High School Drama Festival sponsored by the National Thespian Society will be held at West Virginia University, on April 17, 18. The Speech Department of West Virginia University will act as host. Earlier in the spring several Regional Festivals will be held throughout the state. In the interest of economy in time and money, the Festival and the State Literary Contest will be held at the same time, thereby permitting many groups to be present for both events.

Clayton, Mo.

Troupes interested in establishing local constitution to govern their activities will find the one adopted by the Dramatic Guild (Troupe No. 322) at the Clayton High School an excellent model. Copies may be obtained by writing to Mr. Blandford Jennings, Thespian Troupe Sponsor.



Cast and stage set for *Spring Fever*, a production of Thespian Troupe No. 39 at the Preston, Idaho, High School. Miss Agnes Howe, director.

BRAND NEW THREE ACTS FOR THIS SEASON

Young Adventure
by George Savage and
5 men, 7 women.

Main Street Princess
by Boyce Loving
5 men, 8 women.

Prom King
by Esther Olson.
7 men, 10 women.

Double or Nothing
by Glenn Hughes.
7 men, 6 women.

Harmony House
by Conrad Seiler.
6 men, 7 women.

Minus A Million
by Jean Lee Latham.
5 men, 5 women.

Calling All Ghosts
by James F. Stone.
5 men, 7 women.

Four Cheers For Joan
by Philip Dunning and
L. G. Lighton
8 men, 7 women.

Christmas Plays

Star Eternal, by Olive Price. American family spends Christmas in Bethlehem. Opportunity for singing carols. 2 men, 3 boys; 1 woman, 3 girls.

La Posada, by Agnes Emelie Peterson. Colorful Mexican play. Opportunity for music and costumes. 4 men, 3 boys; 1 woman, 4 girls.

They'll Never Look There, by Jean Lee Latham. Homey modern family comedy with a holiday background. 2 men, 2 boys; 2 women, 2 girls.

Builder of Christmas Fires, by Melba G. Bastedo. Lively fantasy, involving a crotchety miser, a weary woman, a happy boy, and gay carollers.

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Fun To Be Free, by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Cover design by Walt Disney. Prefatory letter by Wendell L. Willkie. Presented recently by Fight For Freedom, Inc., at Madison Square Garden, New York City, with Tallulah Bankhead, Franchot Tone, Burgess Meredith, Melvyn Douglas, and other stars. No royalty fee for amateur production. Books 30c.

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Scene from the popular play, *What A Life*, as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 352 at the Robbinsdale, Minn., Senior High School. Directed by Miss Bess V. Sinnott.

Watertown, S. Dak.

The first long play of the season, *Young April*, will be given by the Junior Class early in December at the Watertown High School (Thespian Troupe No. 330), with Miss Florence M. Bruhn directing. The dramatic season opened at this school on October 1 with the performance of a pageant sponsored by Thespians and members of the regular dramatics clubs. Thespians performed before the South Dakota Educational Association on October 31. —Betty Scholtz, Secretary.

Lincoln, Ill.

Two successful performances of *She Stoops to Conquer* on November 13, 14, marked the opening of the present dramatics season at the Lincoln High School (Thespian Troupe No. 225), under the direction of Mr. Lloyd E. Roberts. The one-act play, *Sam Average*, was given in observance of Armistice Day by members of the dramatics class. Thespians presented a short play, *Tobacco Alley*, a satire on *Tobacco Road*, at the annual meeting of the Illinois Teachers of Speech Convention held at Champaign on November 8. Members of the dramatics class attended a special assembly program at Lincoln College at which time Mr. Charles Lum, Shakespearean actor, presented scenes from several of Shakespeare's plays.

Morgantown, W. Va.

Members of Troupe No. 27 at the Morgantown High School will open the 1941-42 dramatic season with a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* on November 28. Miss Dorothy Stone White, Troupe Sponsor, is directing the play. *Brother Bill*, a one-act play, was given by one of the dramatics classes for Patrons' Night on October 28.

Tuscola, Ill.

Thespians at the Tuscola High School gave their first play of this season, *Double or Nothing*, on October 16. The production was directed by Miss Thelma Grumbles, new Sponsor for Troupe No. 180 at this school.

Massillon, Ohio

New interest in dramatics and Thespian activities at the Washington High School was promptly created this fall with the appearance of "The Thespian Masque," a monthly publication published by Thespian Troupe No. 178, at this school. The paper carries news about active and alumni members of the Troupe, play productions, and other activities of a dramatic nature. The editorial staff is made up of Mary Jane Harding, Jessie McGuire, Dave Leffler, and Dick Leffler, with Mr. M. W. Wickersham, Troupe Sponsor, in charge. The paper is furnished free of charge to all active and alumni members of the Troupe. Copies are also furnished to a number of other Thespian Troupes in Ohio. (Sponsors interested in seeing a copy of this interesting publication may secure one by writing Mr. Wickersham.)

The season's playbill opened on October 30 with a production of the Broadway comedy, *The Male Animal*, one of the first productions of this play by a high school cast. Part of the proceeds from this production will be used by Thespians to defray expenses to several professional productions in Cleveland during the year.

Ashland, Ohio

Thespian meetings at the Ashland High School are being held regularly on the first and third Mondays of the month. Through graduation many members of the Troupe have been lost, but a special effort is being made this fall to build the Troupe membership. Six new members were added in October and others will qualify as soon as more of this season's plays are given. Under the leadership of Mr. John I. Carlson, Thespians will take over the complete production of a French farce, *In the Suds*, which will be given every night for an entire week in the classroom "Little Theatre."

FOR



CHRISTMAS



6 New Non-Royalty One-Acters

Lift Thine Eyes. By Marion Leonard Bishop. 8 W. 30 minutes. 50 cents. *Humor and pathos . . . yes and some words of wisdom appropriate to the Christmas season.*

Mrs. Bascom Keeps Christmas. By Lena B. Adams. 6 W. 20 minutes. 35 cents. *Although Martha, herself, does not believe in miracles, it seems that she works them, for the result of her outburst amounts to just that.*

Shadow on the Sun. By Florence R. Kahn. 7 W. 25 minutes. 50 cents. *A tender little play about boarding-school girls . . . and Christmas . . . and Sally's belief that when one tells a lie, a shadow passes over the sun.*

Christmas on Erie Street. By Graydon Goss. 8 M., 9 W., 1 child. 30 minutes. 50 cents. *Two newsboys and an array of Christmas shoppers collaborate to bring to Erie Street a tale worth the telling.*

Lady of the Market Place. By Charlotte I. Lee. 14 W. Verse-speaking choir of angels and the three wisemen. About twenty minutes. 50 cents. *The verse-speaking choir is not absolutely essential, for music may be used as a background instead. A beautiful and reverent story of Old Mexico.*

The Case of the Strange Baby. By Lena B. Adams. 1 M., 8 W. or all-female cast. About 15 minutes. 35 cents. *A very simple little allegory that is adaptable to almost any situation.*

OTHER CHOICE PLAYS

In the Light of the Star. By Agnes Emelie Peterson. 5 M., 1 W. About 30 minutes. 50 cents. Royalty, \$5.00. *Consistently a favorite where something with literary charm is desired—where acting and directing can be as good as the play.*

The Shepherd's Star. By Janet Katherine Smith. 14 M., 8 W. 75 cents. *One of the finest pageant-plays in print. Royalty, \$10.00 if admission is charged; \$5.00 if not.*

Many other Christmas plays are described in the 1942 catalog. Send for a copy if you do not have one.

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SAN FRANCISCO

What Becomes of Thespians?

WHAT becomes of Thespians after graduation? For a long time we have known that some go to college, some secure employment in local industries, some move away, and of late many of the boys find their way into Uncle Sam's Army and Navy. A good illustration of this is given by the following report of the 1941 Thespians at the Washington High School, Massillon, Ohio:

Loretta App—working at Boerner's and attending Canton "Comp" school.
Ruth Davis—attending Miami University.
Bob Egan—working in the office of The Fort Pitt Bridge Works.
Jr. Fenstermaker—taking a post-graduate course.
Joan Garrigues—attending Skidmore College.
Jack Jacoby—working for United States Engineers.
Jean Johnson—working for The Massillon Savings and Loan Co.
Marilyn Lough—attending Ohio Wesleyan University.
Mary Lee Lane—attending Ohio State University.
Mel Milligan—attending Harvard University.
Mary Ann Reed—attending the University of Wisconsin.
Harriet Portman—attending Carnegie Tech.
Francis Sharon—attending Kent State University.
Karl Schmidt—attending the University of Wisconsin.
Laurel Secrist—attending Ohio State University.
Priscilla Smith—attending Ohio Wesleyan University.
Myron Weinstein—taking a post-graduate course.
Dan Williams—working at Griscomb Russell.

Thespians will have complete charge of the stage set plans, make-up, and directing. A by-law added to the Troupe Constitution permits a student to become a Master-Thespian by earning an additional 19 points. At the close of the year each Master-Thespian will receive a jeweled pin as a degree for his accomplishments.

New interest in play production was created this fall with the premiere high school production of the Broadway play, *Out of the Frying Pan*, given to large audiences on November 13, 14. The play was directed by Mr. Carlson.—Marjorie Hetler, Secretary.

Newport News, Va.

Concerning the picture of *Little Women* which appeared in the October issue of THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN, Miss Dorothy M. Crane, Sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 122 at the Newport News High School, writes as follows:

In connection with the picture from *Little Women*, published in THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN magazine, I imagine that some teachers who have produced this play wonder what scene was represented. Consequently, I should like to explain the picture and offer a suggestion to other directors who may be producing this play or any other old-fashioned, more or less stylized production of this sort.

Stealing an idea from *Life With Father*, we planned and presented a series of most interesting curtain calls patterned after old-fashioned deguerreotype photographs. We also photographed ten or twelve scenes of this type and used them extensively in advertising. They aroused great interest and were a most helpful means of publicity. Also, the use of this type of curtain call makes a delightful ending to the play and one which is greatly appreciated by the audience. I believe this idea would be very interesting and helpful in any case where a stylized old-fashioned is to be given.

East Orange, N. J.

Thespian Troupe No. 452 was organized at the Clifford J. Scott High School during the spring semester of last season, with Bill Perine as president; Sue Lange, vice-president; Howard Brundage, secretary; and Betty Astridge, treasurer. The Troupe was established under the leadership of Mr. Eugene R. Wood, on leave from his regular teaching position at the Webster Groves, Mo., High School.

The 1940-41 season included two performances of *Bachelor Born*, and one performance each of four one-act plays for school assemblies. Dramatic classes meeting were held three times a week. The present year promises many more activities. Dramatics is now organized on a permanent curricular basis with two solid courses meeting five times a week and three classes meeting twice a week. A total of one hundred students are now enrolled in dramatics. Three major plays, with two performances each, are scheduled for the season. The season will also include seven one-act plays which will be given for assembly programs. Thespian officers for this year are Suzanne Lange, president; Robert Gilbert, vice-president; Charles Roesch, secretary; and Herbert Hutchison, treasurer.

Leetsdale, Pa.

Miss Eleanor Kay Hutchison, president of Thespian Troupe No. 421, during 1940-41 at the Leetsdale High School addressed the Troupe at its first meeting held on September 15. Miss Hutchison told of her experiences at the Jennerstown Summer Theatre where she worked as an apprentice for two weeks. Miss Hutchison also related her experiences in New York City where she met George Kaufmann, Edna Ferber, and representatives from Paramount and RKO Studios. Miss Ethel Virginia Peaslee, founder of Troupe No. 421, will supervise its activities this season. Elmer Kacilin is Troupe president.—*Lois Anthony, Secretary.*

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Setting for the Wig and Paint production of *Dark Victory* at the Champaign, Ill., High School (Thespian Troupe No. 106). Directed by Miss Marion Stuart.

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ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO. 10 min. Won first in Illinois and third in National Collegiate Contests, 1941. Praises America and her "way of life," and discusses our problem, the subversive elements that are in our midst. 50c

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BROTHERHOOD. Governor Staasen. 7 min. Good. 50c

THE DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC. Thomas W. Lamont. 10 min. A patriotic, rousing speech for Defense. 50c

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS. 10 min. Won first in Indiana, first in Eastern Division and second in National Collegiate Contests, 1941. 10 min. This 100% American speech is sure to be a winner in this year's high school contests. 50c

OUR DAYS. Senator Carl A. Hatch. 10 min. "Our days will be what we make them. Let our days be glad days, brave days, and better days." 50c

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TEST OF CITIZENSHIP. J. Edgar Hoover. 10 min. Splendid. 50c

TWO MEN. Dorothy Thompson. 12 min. One of the best new orations that will be offered this year. A dramatic, appealing comparison of Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill. A sure winner. 50c

WAKE UP, AMERICA. 10 min. Won Ohio State Collegiate Contest, 1941. Filled with patriotic zeal, this oration is a plea that we make sure that the principles of America will live on. 50c

WOMEN AND THE FUTURE. 10 min. Won first in Illinois State and second in Eastern Division Collegiate Contests (Women's Division), 1941. "May future generations say with pride that Walt Whitman was right when he said: 'The most hopeful thing about America is the quality of its women.'" 50c

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1. Is prompt at all rehearsals.
2. Learns lines as soon as instructed to.
3. Is never slow on entrances or exits.
4. Practices picking up cues quickly and with spontaneity.
5. Thinks his part.
6. Makes himself felt first, then heard.
7. Keeps in character, even when not the center of interest...
8. Listens attentively to those talking.
9. Makes colorful note of rehearsal schedule and willingly and promptly rearranges or cancels all engagements that would interfere with the consecutive order of rehearsals, the building of the play.
10. Accepts the directions of the producing director as from a major general, without question.
11. When asked to repeat lines or action, does so quickly in order that atmosphere be kept and no time wasted.
12. Does not talk off-stage.

Sponsor, attended the National High School Drama Conference at Indiana University early in June. Troupe officers for this season are president, John Guthrie; vice-president, Elaine Smith; secretary, Stanley Hunt; and program chairman, Willis Jensen. Miss Linford supervises all Thespian Troupe activities this year. The Troupe now boasts a membership of thirty-three.—Elaine Smith, Secretary.

Hampton, Va.

Under the leadership of Mr. Luther W. Machen, new Sponsor for Thespian Troupe No. 300 at the Hampton High School, ten new members were registered with the National Office late in October. Mr. Machen reports that the Troupe is now well established with a number of activities planned for this season. The first full length play of the year, *Tiger House*, was given to large audiences early this fall.

Columbus, Ohio

In order to further the cause of dramatics throughout the state, the 1941-42 Ohio High School Drama Festival will be sponsored jointly by the National Thespian Society and the Ohio High School Speech League. According to present arrangements Regional Festivals are tentatively scheduled for early spring at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio University, Hei-

★ ★ ★ ★

Just Off the Press

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delberg College, Kent State University, Capital University and Western Reserve University. The State Festival (finals) will be held at the Ohio State University on April 24, 25.

Jamestown, N. Y.

Three nearby high schools participated in the drama festival held on April 25, at the Jamestown High School (Thespian Troupe No. 364) under the direction of Miss Myrtle Paetznick, Thespian Sponsor. They were: Bemus Point High School, Falconer High School, and Cel-



A tense moment in *The Family Upstairs* as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 327 at the Miami Senior High School. Mrs. Rochelle J. Williams, director.

Best Thespian Honor Roll 1940-41 Season

(Late Reports)

Adeline Tinder, Troupe No. 401, College Academy, Berea, Ky.

Eleanor Parker, Troupe No. 434, Chowchilla, Calif., High School.

eran High School. Groups were also present from Lakewood High School and the Youngsville, Pa., High School, although they had no plays entered in the festival. More than 500 persons attended the event. Thespians and members of the Pretenders Club also sponsored a contest on May 9, for the junior high schools of the city. Over 1000 persons attended this event. The year closed with the test performance of a new play, *Sky Road*. Miss Paetznick and her Thespians are planning a number of dramatic activities for this season.

Carteret, N. J.

Officers for the present season at the Carteret High School, Troupe No. 426 are: president, Stephen Fistes; secretary, Eulalie Beech. Miss Harietta LeBow is Troupe Sponsor. Among the activities of the Troupe last spring were several trips to Broadway where Thespians saw performances of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Corn Is Green*, and *My Sister Eileen*. Sixteen members of the Masque and Wig Club qualified for membership in the National Thespian Society.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The 1940-41 season at the Fort Lauderdale High School (Thespian Troupe No. 348) included two major plays, *The Crime at Blossoms* and *Night of January 16*, the production of an evening of one-act plays staged by Thespians, a radio program, and a school carnival, for which Thespians wrote an original sketch. Thespians reconditioned all stage scenery and acted with honors in all the productions for the year. Thespians who distinguished themselves during the season were William Kesson, Lawrence Browning and Lois Steinhoff. Mr. Donald McQueen served as Troupe Sponsor. — *Lois Steinhoff, Secretary.*

Hazleton, Pa.

The 1940 dramatic program at the Hazleton Senior High School (Troupe No. 257) ended late in May with an entire week of activities appropriately called "Thespian Week." On Monday the last Troupe meeting of the year was held. On Tuesday evening a group of twenty-four students were admitted to Thespian membership at an impressive ceremony. On Wednesday, Thespians entertained at a banquet held at the Hotel Altamont. Thursday evening Thespians held their banquet at the Catholic Women's Club, and followed with the presentation of *The Boor*. Friday, designated as "Thespian Day," included the production of the Thespian play, *Antic Spring*, and the presentation of awards before the entire student body. Miss Marion W. Brown reports that the season was one of the most successful in recent years.

Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

The popular comedy, *What a Life*, was given by the Junior and Senior Classes on November 7 and 8 as the first major production of the present season at the Sault Ste. Marie High School (Thespian Troupe No. 141), with Miss Agnes Solusberg directing. Early this fall Thespians gave the one-act *The Boys Come Home* before members of the local Little Theatre.

We inadvertently failed to give due credit to the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C., for the picture we published with the article on "Drama of the River Plate" in the November issue. Our sincere apologies.
—Editor.

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PAY DIRT, by Nat Foster Holmes. A rousing Western mystery comedy. 5m. 5w. Price 50 cts.

TO JENNY, WITH LOVE, by Betty Smith and Robt. Finch. A delightful one-act romantic episode about Jenny Lind. 4m. 4w. Price 50 cts.

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ROMANTIC BY REQUEST—by Ahlene Fitch. A rural summer hotel, run by peppery Grandma, is the scene of this helter-skelter bit of fun. "... the play was a huge success from all angles"—reports Mr. Rykken of Dodge Center, Minn., and other producers are just as enthusiastic about it. Price 75c. Royalty, \$25.00.

PRICE ONE ACTS

WEATHER OR NO—Comedy by Melvene Draheim, which took first prize in the 1941 Drake University original play tournament. A lively scene in a real estate office, and excellent for either entertainment or contest purposes. Cast, 3 m, 2 w. Price 50c. Royalty, \$5.00.

WOMAN'S PAGE (UNCENSORED)—Comedy by Anna Mae Fisher. Lady editors in the newspaper office have an exciting day. Those who have searched for a worthy successor to the famous "Mushrooms Coming Up" will find this equally good entertainment. Cast of 9 women. Price 50c.

DARK WIND—Drama by Evelyn Neuenberg. Winner of several west coast tournaments, and awarded superior rating in the 1941 National Drama Festival sponsored by Thespian. Cast, 1 m, 3 w (or all women). Price 50c. Royalty, \$5.00.

READINGS

THE WALTZ—by Dorothy Parker. Humorous reading which has won contests all over the country and is available in manuscript for the first time. Price 50c.

A VISIT TO BERGHTESGADEN—by Hillel Bernstein. This story of Hitler has aroused widespread discussion, and is undoubtedly one of the strongest new dramatic readings available. Characters, 2 men. Price 60c.

THE LESSON OF FRANCE—by Andre Maurois. Oration which went to the National Forensic Tournament in 1941 and will again be one of the strongest orations of the season. Price 50c.

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What's New Among Books and Plays

EDITED BY H. T. LEEPER

Review Staff: Donald Woods, Blandford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Kari Natalie Reed, Daniel Turner, Elmer S. Crowley, Mary Ella Bovee, Helen Movius and Virginia Leeper.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer, and mention of a book or play in this department does not necessarily mean that such a publication is recommended by THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN.

Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.

Who Is Mr. Chimpie, a farce comedy in three acts, by Marcus Bach. 4 m., 6 w. Percentage royalty. Counterplots introduce love theme and depict young artists struggles to crash Hollywood's glamour gates. Mrs. Chimpie runs a rooming house. She boasts that she can crash into pictures and much to her surprise she gets the lead in a Mexican production. She becomes the "queen of the manor" and reduces her guests to the station of servants. Her husband, Willie, suffers the most. Imagine her collapse when she discovers that she has failed the screen test. Moreover, her husband is the one that is chosen. Willie becomes his own master and then declares that his little woman is his "first and only." The play is pleasing, the characters animated, and the writing staccato in its attack. It will satisfy an audience that is looking for good entertainment.—Marion Stuart.

Midnight, a new mystery-comedy in three acts, by Glenn Hughes. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty is on the percentage basis with a \$25 maximum and no minimum. The play is well written and grammatically correct. The story opens on a New Year's Eve in the supposedly deserted house of the Greenwoods. A man disappears up the stairway, Clair Greenwood and Bob Morris stumble into the dark room on a treasure hunt. Aunt Julia and her maid and chauffeur come out to the house to escape the noise of the city. Kate and Eddie are energetic newspaper reporters out on a ghost watch for a story for their paper. There is a G-man, a foreign agent, National Defense and love all woven into the plot and developed by sparkling dialogue and humor. There is excitement and good theatre.—Marion Stuart.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.

Time for Romance, a comedy in three acts, by Alice Gerstenberg. 10 w. Royalty, \$25. For an advance group of players *Time for Romance* should prove a very happy choice. The play covers a chapter in the busy life of Cynthia Clyde who runs a fashionable interior decorating shop. In spite of the demands made upon her by a flourishing business, she finds time for romance with Robert Hollister. However, Gabrielle Reed, a glamorous private secretary, is also in love with Mr. Hollister. As the plot progresses we see that "time for business" has a more profound grip on Cynthia than "time for romance," and the climax is reached when she receives a telegram from Gabrielle that she and Holly eloped and are on their way to Rio for a three month's cruise. The characters are well drawn, the dialogue is plausible, and story moves along at a quick tempo. We predict this play will receive a warm reception from amateur groups.—E. B.

People Don't Change, a Christmas comedy in one act, by Jean Lee Latham. 2 m., 4 w. No royalty. Sally and Janey try to reform their crusty "too sensible" Dad. They buy a new coat for Mother and attach a note in Dad's handwriting, expecting Dad to see it first and approve. Mother finds it first, but Dad turns out to be not as crusty as supposed. Senior and junior high school.—H. T. L.

Promote the General Welfare, a play of democracy in one act, by Anne Coulter Martens. 3 m., 3 w. No royalty. The kid sister won't play if she can't always be the leader.

Her older brother scolds her for her non-cooperative, undemocratic spirit. Suddenly he realizes that he has been acting exactly the same way when he fails to win the college election. High school assembly material.—H. T. L.

Samuel French, 25 west 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Sixteen in August, a three-act comedy, by Dorothy Bennett and Link Hannah. 3 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$25. Well-written plays about teenage doings, like this one, are always in demand. The formula is familiar—about the youngsters who are so much more able than their elders in solving their own problems despite a few misunderstandings about whose heart belongs to whom. This time we have "Gusty" Goodrich and her collaborator, Arthur Peterson, curing the paralysis of a girl whose ailment had baffled Gusty's physician father. The dialogue is rapid and authentically colloquial; all the characters are sympathetic without being sugary. This would be a good play for the school which finds itself ready for something better than run-of-the-mine "sure-fire" farces. It might well be done, too, by an above-average junior high school group.—Blandford Jennings.

Eleven Against the Sea, a melodrama in three acts for an all-male cast, by James Reach, 11 m. Royalty, \$10. This is a briskly paced thriller whose scene is a deserted shack on an uninhabited island, where eleven shipwrecked men work out a situation involving hidden treasure, treachery, greed, and fortitude. The characters are interestingly varied, and the action never lags. While the play has no literary value to speak of and little worth as an experience beyond its story interest, it will probably appeal to boys' schools, training camps, and other male groups who wish a play that is not too difficult and which is almost sure to hold an audience.—Blandford Jennings.

The Wagon to the Star, a comedy in three acts, by Jeanette Carlisle. Adapted from the novel of the same name by Mildred F. Meese. 4 m., 10 w. Royalty, \$25.00. This is a light comedy about high school youngsters that should prove thoroughly appealing to junior high schools and other dramatic groups with limited experience in acting. The cast is one that can be found in any high school, and the roles play themselves with ease and plausibility. Although the part of Mary Carstens occupies the center of attention throughout, the other parts have not been slighted. The theme of the play is one that school groups will like. The play provides no serious problem as far as staging is concerned.—E. B.

Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th St., New York, N. Y.

Four Cheers for Joan, a farce-comedy in three acts, Philip Dunning and L. G. Lighton. 8 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$25. This is one of those farce-comedies that audiences enjoy and amateur groups like to produce. Jean Eastworth, her sisters Alice and Letitia, and the gay aunt, Hortense, invade the comfortable summer home of their rich uncle George Weststable, while he is away, for the purpose of "winning their way into the good graces of Oyster Bay society." The hope of finding rich husbands is also an important part of their plans. Three acts of clever dialogue and exciting situations follow with the result that Uncle George is given the opportunity to part with some of his money, and his charming nieces and the gay aunt

Hortense find the rich husbands they are after. This should be a very desirable choice for high school groups that have experience. The characters must show polish and sophistication, and the action must move along at a quick pace. The play is clean and wholesome throughout, but not devoid of life as is often true of the so-called "clean" plays.—E. B.

Current Contest Reading, a series of ten cuttings from worth while literature of today. Selected and edited by Mildred Clapper. Price, \$1.25. These are not just another collection of readings! They have the endorsement of the National Forensic League, and are unusually good from the standpoint of interest and literary value. Such titles as *The Green Pastures*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Crow's Nest*, are among those contained in this volume. Although the cuttings are fully protected by copyright, written permission may be obtained for public presentation. No charge is made when readings are used in the classroom. Excellent for high schools and colleges.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Walter H. Baker Co., 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

Costumes By You. Price 75c. A collection of eight talks on practical costuming. The talks are on methods and policy, and cover such matters as use of color, use of substitute materials, anachronisms as illusion breakers, the necessity of knowing the manners of a period as well as its dress, etc. A booklet well worth its price to the amateur costumer.—H. T. L.

Singin' Bill From Blue Ridge Hill, a comedy in three acts, by Henry Rowland. 5 m., 7w. No royalty. When nearby banks are robbed, gossip women at a mountain resort throw suspicion on a visiting writer. Another boarder, untouched by the gossips, is found to be the culprit. Rural comedy of non-royalty level.—H. T. L.

Too Busy to Work, a comedy in three acts, by Lawrence Worcester. 6 m., 6 w. No royalty. This is the story of a young man's struggles to keep his television station going in spite of the underhanded opposition of the manager of the local paper and his spiteful and jealous former fiancée. He eventually achieves success with the station and finds romance with his resourceful assistant at the station.—H. T. Leeper.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio.

Pay Dirt, a western comedy in 3 acts by Nat Foster Holmes. 5m. 5w. Royalty: 1st two perf. free; additional, \$3.00. When Gail Hopkins arrives in the old western ghost town of Lost Lode, she finds excitement aplenty. Here she gets permission from "Pop" to renovate an old ramshackled hotel for the tourist season, but the nephew of the man "Pop" is reported to have murdered arrives on the scene to claim the building. How "Pop" wins his pardon after Gail and Bob discover the lost lode brings the play to a satisfying conclusion. The character of Plantem, the Undertaker, is somewhat overdrawn, but schools wanting a non-royalty play of the old west will find *Pay Dirt* adequate.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Ignorance Is Bliss, a farce in three acts, by Jean Provençe. 6 m., 8 w., extras, 1 interior. Royalty, first two performances free; each additional, \$2.50. Robert, a student at Central High School, enters an American Legion speaking contest to win enough money to take his newest heart-throb to the Prom. Robert's faithful helper, Virginia, works slavishly on the speech for him, but when the fateful night arrives, the speech is lost, the heart-throb is lost—but Robert wins first place and a new slant on life. Suitable for high schools desiring a non-royalty play with few problems in staging and production.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

The Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Warning Wings a mystery play in three acts, by Richard Adams. 5m., 5w. No royalty until July 1, 1942, providing ten play books purchased. A storm at night, the shadow of a bird,

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a house built on the sea coast, strange voices, secret doors, and people with peculiar ways combine to make this one of those mystery dramas that keep audiences in suspense. Although there is nothing original about the play—is there about any mystery play?—the dialogue is clever and the story moves along at a pace to keep the audience fully engrossed in what is happening on the stage. The play is relatively easy to stage and provides many opportunities for good acting. In the hands of an imaginative director, this play can be exciting entertainment. A clever ending brings the actors and the audience to their normal selves again.

—E. B.

Little Men, a dramatization of Louisa M. Alcott's immortal novel in three acts, arranged by Dana Thomas. 7 m., 7 w., and one child (if preferred). Royalty, \$10. A splendid adaptation of Louisa M. Alcott's famous story. Once more we re-live the days with the characters at Plumfield. The author has written the play so that any group of young people may find it usable. Youthful characters in the original situations and using the Alcott conversation but conforming to the teen-age. This play is adaptable to different age levels. The addition of more characters gives wider appeal and a more characteristic and convincing dialogue to the wholesome theme. Interspersed through the dramatic incidents are the humorous situations. Timely action, suitable emotion, and strong climax scenes. An appealing vehicle for amateurs.—*Bess V. Sinnott*.

Ivan-Bloom-Hardin Company, 3806 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

Weather or No, a comedy in 1 act, by Melvane Draheim. 3 m., 2 w., 1 interior setting. Royalty, \$5.00. Here is a play well suited to high school groups. As the scene opens we find Mr. Middleworth venting his temper in his downtown real estate office because the rain-storm of the day is holding up a \$40,000 deal. He has a customer who won't talk business except on the golf course. The office staff, playing

on Mr. Middleworth's superstitious nature, convince him that the rain will continue for forty days because he has fired one of his employees on St. Swithin's day. Middleworth rehires the employee and the sun comes out immediately. P. S. The weather report, unbeknown to Mr. Middleworth, predicted sunshine before noon.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Woman's Page (Uncensored), a comedy in 1 act, by Anna Mae Fisher. 9 w. Royalty: purchase of eight copies of the play. In the temporary editorial room of "The Daily Star" the lady editors of the paper are working at their daily problems. One editor tries out setting up exercises for her column, another is demonstrating a new beauty clay, and still another is writing advice for her love-lorn column. Into this gathering walks Mrs. Elmer Jones wanting to know how she can hold her husband. Strangely enough it takes the solving a murder case to clear up her problem. There really is no mystery, but this extremely light and farcical play can be done by any amateur group.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Wetmore Declamation Bureau, 1631 South Paxton St., Sioux City, Iowa.

Pride and Prejudice, an 18th century comedy in 3 acts, by Pauline Phelps. Adapted from Jane Austen's popular novel of the same name. 6 m., 8 w., 1 interior setting. Costumes. Royalty (special introductory offer): schools must order at least ten copies of play book; repeat performances, \$2.50 each. Here is another of Pauline Phelps' triumphs in adapting interesting novels into excellent plays. Although this well-known story cannot be recommended for inexperienced amateurs, it does provide outstanding character portrayals and a fast moving plot for advanced high school and college groups. The director will find that music is indispensable to the success of this play and that a knowledge of 18th century customs and manners is important.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

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"There is a long pause while Victoria sits brooding over her failure. Then . . . determination brings her to her feet . . . Anne crosses the hall toward the stairs.

Victoria: Wait a moment. You mustn't go without your pearls.

Anne: It's all right, Victoria. If you want them, keep them.

Victoria: No, no! Rip wants you to have them. Come in. (Anne enters reluctantly. Victoria locks the door behind her.)

Anne: (Frightened) What . . . ?

Victoria: I am going to show you my treasure room. (She goes up to the panel and touches the hidden spring. The section of wall moves slowly out revealing the steel door . . . The steel door swings slowly open showing darkness beyond.)

Anne: Oh! What . . .

Victoria: (Holding out her hand to Anne) Rip wants you to have your pearls. Come . . . !

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Formerly Director of Dramatics, State Teachers College, California, Pa.

Articles Recommended for their Practical Value to Teachers and Students of Dramatics.

THE STORY OF J. M. B. By Sewell Stokes. *Theatre Arts for November, 1941.* So you've always thought of Sir James M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*, as a sugar-coated sentimentalist? According to Sewell Stokes, this conception is entirely erroneous. He was a cynic "of the first water." It is true that he refused to face life realistically, that he didn't want to grow up, that he was constantly seeking adventure, but even a genius has his illusions shattered. A certain bitterness crept into his later plays which reflected his anger at finding the world the way it was instead of the way he wanted it to be.

PORTABLE STAGE PROPS STORED IN SMALL SPACE. By Lester Lehnerr. *Popular Mechanics for October, 1941.* Is your Troupe just starting to accumulate equipment for your stage? There are some excellent suggestions with clearly defined illustrations of methods of assembling portable stage scenery. Actual measurements, materials, and directions should prove most helpful to high school stage crews and their directors.

SUMMER THEATER. *Life for September, 1941.* Among the successful plays of the most successful "Straw Hat" season was *The Yellow Jacket*, featuring Alexander Woolcott as the Chinese master-of-ceremonies and Harpo Marx as the property man. This fantasy, written in 1911 by George Hazelton and Harry Benrimo, might prove good fun to you Thespians as something different for your theatrical season.

ACTORS WITHOUT AUDIENCES. By John Erskine. *Liberty for August 2, 1941.* If it's a moving picture career you desire, Mr. Erskine's interview with Thomas Mitchell, Academy Award winner, will give you some helpful advice. According to this established actor, the stage is the only real school of the theatre. That is why the majority of your moving picture-trained actors are so inarticulate. Mr. Mitchell maintains that an actor learns real speech and inflection not only from listening to seasoned actors in the cast but by the constant repetition of the lines of a play given night after night. He has the import of the plot to convey to his audiences. Each night he makes subtle changes in inflection until he senses from their response that they have grasped the proper meaning. This, of course, is impossible for the motion picture-trained actor.

The reason the veteran stage actor is more effective on the screen than his celluloid counterpart is his ability to imagine and recall previous audience responses and thus read his lines in the manner that will bring about the greatest understanding. His stage experience has taught him the technique of conveying meaning by speech. "The stage veteran with imagination and a good memory can speak into the microphone as if his audience were there. He can guess in advance the moods of the audience which some day will look at the picture."

A THEATRE FOR THE PEOPLE. By John Gassner. *Current History for October, 1941.* When Congress passed that ill-fated bill to close all Federal Theatres, it deprived a vast audience of several million people an opportunity to attend good legitimate plays. As Miss Hallie Flanagan, its national director, stated a short time ago, the total expense of the entire project did not exceed the cost of one battleship, yet 1,200 plays were produced.

All has not been lost, however, because from that institution such people have emerged as Earl Robinson, John Latouche, Orson Welles, John Houseman, and many others who have

made notable contributions to the theatre. Various producing groups have managed to survive in spite of the loss of subsidy: New York Theatre Guild, Barter Theatre of Virginia, Roanoke Island Pageants by Paul Green, Dollar Top Theatre in New York, the Labor Stage, the Experimental Theatre started just last year, as well as many other producing groups.

THE FREEST THEATRE IN THE REICH. By Curt Daniel. *Theatre Arts for November, 1941.* Here is further proof that the theatre is a vital and important part of our daily lives. Even in the German concentration camps where no provisions are made for the prisoners' comfort or pleasure, plays and vaudeville flourish, usually under cover. In most instances the guards, who regard human life less than a cigarette butt, would inflict horrible punishment culminated by death on the participants. Hence, the entertainers perform under great personal risk.

In Buchenwald, one of the camps, the often drunken commander permits and even encourages theatrical entertainment. He even commanded "a week of humor" and appointed a director to produce a show from the professional and amateur talent in the camp.

DRAMA AT THE CROSSROADS. By Norris Houghton. *Atlantic for November, 1941.* Mr. Houghton, who traveled 19,000 miles to observe the theatrical patterns of America, has written a truly exciting account of folk drama in out-of-the-way places. His first phenomenon concerned a Princeton classmate of his, Robert Nail, who responded to Broadway requests to write a play that he was "too busy." Mr. Houghton found him in his home town of Albany, Texas, entirely absorbed in community dramatics: directing pageants, writing one-act plays for the high school, and giving book reviews. These were the undertakings that made him "too busy" to write a play for Broadway.

Another disciple of the wilderness is Nick Kay, who helped a group of students in an Alabama mining community write and produce a play. The audience of miners was so impressed with it that they shouted, "Do it again." Although an hour in length, the play was repeated on the spot.

Among the universities and state colleges of our country, the University of Wisconsin, Cornell, University of Texas, University of Delaware, State Agricultural College of North Dakota, and the University of North Carolina do a great deal in the way of stimulating and guiding dramatic activities throughout their respective states. Perhaps the best known of the group are the "Carolina Playmakers," who devote their time to native drama.

THE ACTOR'S CRAFT—A BASIS FOR LIVING. By Tamara Daykarhanova. *Players Magazine for May, 1941.* Teachers of high school dramatics will find this article useful as well as inspirational. As Paul Green said, "For the first time in three hundred and fifty years of our history, the cultural and spiritual leadership of the earth is in our care." This should be a challenge to all teachers of an art. Miss Daykarhanova—actress, teacher, lecturer—feels that dramatic training should be confined to those aspiring for the stage, but that it should be an integral part of our public school education. "The craft of the theatre not only helps to explore and develop the creative abilities of mind and body and thus enlarge the human horizons but uncovers the full range, possibility, and beauty of the human spirit." Her quotation from her great teacher, Constantin Stanislavsky, bears out this statement in his advice to his students.

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